

Provincial Election Newsletter

May 2017

Candidate Responses to CTA Questionnaire

CTA NEWS

Candidates for Chilliwack Riding:

Tracey O'Hara - NDP

*John Martin - Liberals

*Wayne Froese - Green Party

*Ryan McKinnon - Independent

Candidates for Chilliwack-Kent Riding:

Patti MacAhonic - NDP

Laurie Throness - Liberals

*Josie Bleuer - Green Party

*Candidate responses unavailable at press time

1. Given Chilliwack's already overcrowded schools and the impact of the implementation of restored language, how would you advocate for an increase in the necessary space needed for Chilliwack students in September 2017?

PM - What is needed is 35 classrooms by September - an untenable situation. An NDP government will work with school districts and municipalities to ensure that building new schools is a key component in the planning for growth in ridings such as Chilliwack - Kent. School Districts like Chilliwack shouldn't have to wait five years after the fact for a new and necessary school to be built. I will commit as your MLA to work closely with Minister of Education to ensure that our public school system meets the needs of our growing enrolment. You have my word on this.

TO - The current per-pupil funding model doesn't work for the differing costs schools and school boards face. The BC NDP has a firm commitment to plan, build and upgrade our schools and I will work to see that promise realized right here in Chilliwack. We need to act on need immediately, whether it was promised 10 years ago or only stated and recognized in the last 6 months. We don't need the Supreme Court to tell us to fund education properly and we can't afford to wait. On May 9th, please vote for the NDP a government that will take action!

LT - As you may know, recently our government announced 8 new classrooms at Promontory Heights Elementary School, including two multipurpose rooms, bathrooms and storage spaces. The government has also approved a Project Development Report for a new Chilliwack South Side School, due from School District 33 on September 29. So we are working hard to alleviate overcrowding, and although the situation is not entirely convenient at present, I am convinced that all our children are safe and well cared-for, and that our teachers and other staff are giving each and every child a good education.



Check out the CTA Website: www.chilliwackteachers.com

2. How will you ensure the adequate, stable, and predictable funding for the real costs (transportation, hydro, technology upgrades, salary increases, carbon tax, etc) of public education are provided?

PM - BC Liberals changed the fair and equitable funding model to one which penalizes many schools in our public school system. Using a student's based funding model results in low enrolment schools cutting services available to students in high enrolment schools. This model has discriminated against numerous schools, creating "Have" and "Have Not" schools. All children regardless of where they live and go to school have a right to the same level of service and opportunities. An NDP Government will fix this problem and acknowledge increases in operating costs currently shouldered by local school boards, ensuring that funding increases accordingly.

TO - Our pledge is to provide a better, stable, and sustainable model for investing in education. The NDP platform addresses specific needs where it can, like the \$30 million per year for school supplies or the properly supported capital fund for playgrounds, while other real costs will be addressed in our comprehensive review to fully fund public education. Every dollar counts when we invest in education and we will invest in finding savings by upgrading lighting and taking other energy saving measures. Furthermore, an NDP government will work to keep real costs down, addressing the hikes at BC Hydro and ICBC.

LT - Our most recent budget put \$330 million into our school system to hire new teachers and other staff; a very significant amount. We also injected \$228 million over three years to fund cost pressures related to growth in student numbers, \$45 million to eliminate fees for bus services, and \$94 million to defray operational costs in the K-12 sector such as those you mention above.

3. Poverty is a significant factor influencing a student's learning and success in school. What will you do to ensure a strong social support system for families to foster opportunities for all students?

PM - The BC Liberal government refuses to accept the fact that we need a Poverty Reduction Plan. An NDP government will implement such a plan immediately. 680 students receiving lunch each day and over 110 students and families receiving some food assistance for weekends is not acceptable, we need to do better! In a province governed by a party that boasts balanced budgets and a massive surplus, feeding students should not be the responsibility of school boards, staff, parent volunteers and non profits. BCNDP and I, Patti MacAhonic are fully committed to making BC affordable for families and their children.

TO - The impact of poverty in Chilliwack's schools can't be understated; 1 in 5 BC children live in poverty and 23% of those children reside in Chilliwack. We need a poverty reduction strategy with legislated targets and timelines; a NDP government will do just that. Furthermore, we need to address the affordability crisis leaving families and children in poverty and while we have many policies addressing the affordability crisis, childcare is key. Licensed and affordable childcare in our community at \$10 a day, free if the family income doesn't exceed \$40,000, gives choice to parents who currently have none.

LT - There are a plethora of programs that could be cited here, but I will point out just two: Our Single Parent Employment Initiative pays the costs of tuition, child care, transportation and other costs while that parent receives training. Over 4,600 single parents have taken advantage of the program so far, and over 969 have already found jobs that will lift them and their children out of poverty. These are very encouraging results, and our platform promises to expand this with a pilot program for low-income families called LIFT (Low Income Families in Transition), which will further help parents to get the training they need to lift their children out of poverty. This is the best solution.

4. What will you do to improve educational opportunities for students with special needs?

PM - Students with special needs have been seriously discriminated against by the Liberal government. Services have been cut. Support has been reduced and wait times for testing are untenable. An NDP government will support school boards and our public schools to ensure that any child with a special need is identified quickly and addressed through adequate resources and staffing. A once caring and compassionate system has been reduced to making ends meet through fund raising and the conscientious efforts of our teaching professionals. This has to stop. Every child attending public schools in our province has the right to an effective education.

TO - A BC NDP government is committed to a comprehensive review of BC's current K-12 funding formula to move BC's school system to a sustainable model for investing in education. It is essential that this review include expansion and improvement of the educational opportunities for students with special needs. Christy Clark's current funding model doesn't work for the differing needs teachers experience every day and I'm committed to hearing from parents, administrators, support staff and teachers while being guided by principles of inclusion that will see all children finding success in public school, regardless of their learning needs.

LT - Our February budget provided \$147 million over three years to reduce wait lists and strengthen programs and services which provide for the welfare of children and youth, including child protection, children and youth in care, autism programs, and services for children and youth with special needs.

5. Explain your position on large scale, standardized testing (i.e. Foundation Skills Assessment - FSA), and the releasing of this data for the inappropriate and unscientific ranking of schools?

PM - Provincial politically motivated Standardized Testing continues to be detrimental to our public school system. It effectively undermines public schooling by pitting it against private schools with their smaller classes and fewer special needs. The Fraser Institute, a Conservative Think Tank exacerbates this by ranking all schools, comparing performance based on totally unsound criteria. We need cooperation in our school system, not competition. If elected I commit to working to find solutions that use sound criteria and that are fair and equitable for all students, teachers and schools.

TO - I believe education, and the success one experiences from their education, are far too complicated to be properly reflected in single, large scale, standardize testing. Exam results maybe indicators, but are by no means conclusive, and certainly do not take into account the many variables that point to the success students can have through education. As for the release of any such data, I believe the Ministry of Education should properly reflect on indicators of student success before its release to third parties.

LT - I believe in standardized testing, because students will experience competition and challenge in the real world, and standardized testing helps to prepare them for the real world. I have no position on the subsequent ranking of schools.



6. How will you advocate for teachers to have the additional resources, time, and in-service, to effectively implement the new K-12 curriculum?

PM - When curriculum is revised or replaced, government has an obligation to ensure that whatever resources are needed are provided. The Christy Clark government has seriously mismanaged the roll out of this project with detrimental effects. I would compare this to giving a home builder a blue print but no material to do the job. The house just won't be built. I will commit to working to ensure that current and future initiatives involving our public schools will be managed in a fiscally achievable way to ensure success for students, teacher and parents so they can concentrate on learning and teaching.

TO - As your MLA, I will work with my fellow caucus members to see a BC NDP government successfully implement the K-12 curriculum by supporting you. This implementation would include the provision of new technology, lab equipment, learning material and professional development support for teachers. The BC NDP commitment to better public education is steadfast and this is reflected in our approach; teachers need resources and support themselves in order to successfully implement new curriculum. On May 9th, please support my candidacy to help in forming a government that will respect teachers and make education a priority again.

LT - This is a matter to be dealt with within the collective bargaining system as teachers negotiate wages and working conditions with their employers. I would only point out that we are the first government to conclude an agreement with teachers that provides them, and students and parents, with six years of labour peace - quite an achievement.

Elections BC: <http://elections.bc.ca/2017-general-election/>
<http://www.elections.bc.ca> (Elections BC toll-free at 1-800-661-8683)

How to Vote

<http://elections.bc.ca/2017-general-election/how-to-vote/>

Vote at advance voting

Advance voting is available on April 29 and 30, and May 3, 4, 5 and 6. Advance voting places are open from 8am to 8 pm. All voters can vote at any advance voting place, and all advance voting places are wheelchair accessible.

Vote on General Voting Day

General Voting Day is Tuesday, May 9. Voting places will be open from 8am to 8 pm.

Vote at any district electoral office

Voting is available [at any district electoral office](#) daily until General Voting Day.

Where to Vote

<http://elections.bc.ca/2017-general-election/where-to-vote/>

Voter ID

<http://elections.bc.ca/2017-general-election/voter-id/>

All voters must prove their identity and residential address before voting. There are three ways to do this.

It's Time For Change – The numbers tell the story

<http://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/EdFinance/ItsTimeForChange.pdf>

A newsletter produced for the members of the Chilliwack Teachers' Association.