

East Northumberland Public School Board Trustees

Colborne, Cramahe, Brighton, Trent Hills



Municipal Elections

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Cyndi Dickson School Board Trustee 2026

The Ontario government passed significant legislation and other changes affecting local school boards. What do you propose to do going forward to maintain community and parent control over schools and curriculum?

The role of Trustee is to bring forward parent and community concerns to the Board. As I have done for many years, I will speak up on behalf of the community and help parents. Many times parents need help to navigate the system, and know where to turn. I am prompt to return calls, and emails and will continue to help parents as I always have. The curriculum is driven by the Province and Boards are required by both legislation and Provincial Policy to adhere.

What is the ideal class size in your mind? How will you keep student/teacher ratios under control?

Class size is a part of the Provincial negotiations and is out of the hands of Trustees. We speak up about the needs to serve all of our students and the struggles to work within the Provincial funding formula.

What is your plan to maintain schools property/buildings and meet the demands of an increasing and fluctuating population in Northumberland County?

As a long term Trustee I have always highlighted the needs of the Community I represent. Since becoming a Trustee, there has been a new school built "Northumberland Hills" as well as additions to both Brighton Public and most recently Murray Centennial. We will be moving ahead in other parts of Northumberland with an addition for Merwin Greer. I am proud of advocating and the Board listening and putting submissions forward to the Provincial Government to make them happen. As our community grows and the needs change I will always speak up for the needs of the communities I represent as well as supporting others to meet the needs of students and communities.

Does the local school board trustee have a role under the current policy direction of the Ontario government? If so, describe in detail what it is and what areas it impacts?

Currently the Board of Trustees oversee the policies of the Board, we hire the Director as well as do performance appraisals for the Director. We have always had input into the Budget and will continue to be the body that approves the Budget. We will continue to oversee the operations of the Board and bring the voice of our communities forward. We are the direct line to inform senior administration and all Trustees what we hear in our schools and communities. We work and communicate with School Councils to share and listen to their concerns.

With the school year starting and no new contract in place, what are some of the specific changes you would like to see in the Ontario teacher's and education workers contract provincially and locally?

The decisions that will be locally driven are determined by the Provincial negotiating committee. This is not an area determined by Trustees. Trustees do not sit on the Provincial Negotiating teams. This was another major area of change implemented by the Provincial Government.

What are your views on the broadened ministerial takeover powers implemented by the Ontario government? Are you concerned the local school board may be taken over? What would you do, if that happened?

KPRDSB has a history of following through on meeting the requirements of the Ministry. Both financially and accountability. The Board of Trustees work together to constantly learn and be aware of Ministry expectations. While we know that the powers to take over a Board is 100% with the Ministry. I have every confidence that as we have done, the Board will work together to both understand any new changes and meet the needs of students. Student success drives the work of a school Board. Continued financial responsibility and the Boards ability to continue to work together in a positive relationship will be key.

What are three issues you are hearing from parents and residents when you are talking to them during the campaign?

I am hearing a lot of concern regarding the changes in education from the Province and how it will affect our schools. While I can only speak of what has happened to date. People are feeling positive the there will still be a community connection with Trustees remaining part of education. I have had some concerns about student support, I have been able to help those connect to the correct individuals that can help them. It has been positive to help more understand what happens in our schools. There are often assumptions based on the unknown. With a lot of news about what is happening in other parts of the problems. Being able to separate the myths from reality is important. While I hear transportation concerns, having the knowledge I can address these and offer a better understanding or refer to those that may be able to find a better solution.

What are your thoughts on the closure of the International Baccalaureate Program at Cobourg Collegiate Institute? How would you provide enhanced programming for students who may wish to be challenged by the curriculum?

Every student has their own learning needs. We understand that some students want to have more opportunities and each secondary school works hard to meet those needs. Every Secondary school has many opportunities for students to reach out above and beyond. We have student leadership opportunities, the success and needs of every student are important.

What specifically needs to be done to meet the needs of students seeking accommodations, providing details as the goals you would plan to meet during the upcoming term?

When a student require accommodations, there is usually an IEP (Individual Education Plan) prepared for them. There are requirements for this to be reviewed by both the school and parent/caregiver. This document is tailored to the individual needs of a student. As the student progresses, those needs may change or be altered. The support staff, Special Education Resource Teachers and Guidance department work with students and families. Often times this is an area where a Trustee can help parents/caregivers by providing advice of what to ask and what is possible.

How do you intend to meet the fiscal demands of the Ontario government, schools in Northumberland and concerns of ratepayers, giving specifics to your plans to achieve your goals?

There often times are references to the taxes individuals pay. Most people do not pay attention to the education portion of their tax bill. While this is driven by the Province, the education tax base has had the least amount of increase over the years. Often times when looking at tax bills, the total is looked at rather than the breakdown of where there are substantial tax increases. The additions to the schools are NOT driven by the local tax base. The Province collects and distributes the taxes to school board. The Municipal portion of taxes does not cover the actual cost of education in either Northumberland or KPR.

Identify one or more things you intend to introduce that that is not included in this survey that you will accomplish before the end of your term?

I will continue to be the voice of the communities I serve. I will communicate both ways, to the board and to my community. I will commit to the time it takes to best represent my communities and all student at KPRDSB.

What makes you uniquely qualified to be a school board trustee?

My experience as a Trustee gives me a solid base to continue to move forward to help people and be a strong advocate for public education in my communities and for all students. I understand the importance of working as a team. An individual school board trustee has never had or will have the ability to accomplish in isolation, It takes the Board working as a team. I am particularly grateful for the Board supporting my quest for having full French Immersion rather than extended French. This is a great benefit to the students in all the communities I represent. While it may have been in Cobourg, it was not available in the other areas I represent. We now have equitable programming available consistently throughout KPRDSB. My time on the Board has also allowed me to understand the many community supports that can help parents. "It takes a village to raise a child", as Trustee my knowledge and experience will continue to provide that support to students and families.

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