

Elgin County Trustee Candidates: Municipal Election – October 22nd 2018 Survey Results (*denotes incumbent)

Candidate Name	School Closure Issue	One Public System	School Violence
James Todd*	<p>“Dealing with closures due to empty pupil places needs to be balanced with renewal of programming, especially at the secondary level. We must ensure that all four pathways are fully programmed in every secondary school so that students can get the education they choose at their home school. The consultation process needs to be adjusted so that parents and the community at large feels heard rather than only experiencing a one-way communication. “</p>	<p>“I fully support a One Public System. I believe there is plenty of opportunity in a well-designed new system for spiritual education, not only for Catholics but other faith communities such as the Hindu and Muslim traditions. All faiths should readily be accommodated inside a single system.”</p>	<p>“I am deeply concerned about the occurrence of violent incidents in the classroom: it traumatizes students and teachers and puts them at risk. Improving reporting procedures to simplify and streamline it would be welcome, but of even more concern to me is having adequate staffing to allow the offender to be quickly removed from the classroom so that the remaining students are not subjected to the violent behaviour. I am also concerned about the safety risks to teachers having to face violent students. Further training may help, but the emphasis must be on allowing teachers to teach and students to learn.”</p>
	Mental Health	Education Privatization	Why do you want to become a TVDSB trustee?
James Todd*	<p>“I believe that we must fund and program for wellness of students as well as the education of students.I continue to support the realignment of existing resources for safe and inclusive schools, and gladly voted in support of additional funding for mental health initiatives.”</p>	<p>“I believe teachers should be allowed to teach, and not be burdened with additional duties that are not essentially educational in nature. The privatization of non-classroom services such as custodial, maintenance or perhaps lunchroom supervision seems to be a reasonable way to manage growing costs. I believe in a public system and would resist privatizing any educational functions.”</p>	<p>“I believe that school should be safe, nurturing places for the whole student, and that the learning must keep pace with the fundamental changes we see in society. My aim is to steward the resources we receive to ensure these two things. In the past four years, I have advocated for closely tying together the Board’s strategic plans with its budget, and have made great strides in this arena. Next, I advocated for an improved strategic plan that set challenging goals for better schools and better learning. A second dimension that motivates me is making serious improvements to secondary school programming to ensure all four pathways are available to every student at every secondary school. Another area I am keen to</p>

			pursue is to support and encourage the attention paid to literacy in schools. The provincial focus on mathematics and numeracy is worthwhile, but I fear we have not put appropriate emphasis on literacy, and I want to do what I can to see this change. Finally, I want to support the early efforts to help students learn the Global Skills (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, citizenship, self-management).”
	School Closures	One Public System	School Violence
Meaghan Ruddock	“The current government has promised a new process in how schools are closed, including input from teachers and community. I believe that better, more meaningful consultation is needed between Senior Administration, Trustees, parents, teachers, students, community members and all 3 levels of government, so I look forward to seeing what the new process looks like.”	“That is a Provincial issue that Trustee’s are not involved in the decision making process of.”	“I feel that a process should be made after meaningful consultation with parents, teachers, students and healthcare professionals on how best to improve the current process.”
	Mental Health	Education Privatization	Why do you want to be a TVDSB Trustee?
Meaghan Ruddock	“I would lobby our local MPP, Jeff Yurek to advocate to upper levels of government. Sadly, in Elgin County specifically, Mental Health services are difficult to access.”	I were elected, I would work for a system that is in the best interest of parents, teachers and students. While budget is important, decisions should be made with students, teachers and parents at the forefront.”	“I am running for change. I was a part of our school's Pupil Accommodation Review Committee in which I gained valuable insight into the lack of transparency between Sr. Administration and the Trustees, as well as Sr. Administration and the parent groups. I believe that all of our children deserve better. I would like to see Sr. Administration held to a higher, and more transparent standard, but I believe this can only happen if the Trustees as a whole, demand better. I am a mother of three young girls. I understand that a one-size fits all approach does not work when it comes to schools and education. I would like to see more effective long-term

			planning when a school is built in a growth community so that it is not overpopulated the day it opens.”
	School Closure	One Public System	School Violence
Peter Rocchus	<p>“When the closure moratorium is lifted, I believe the issue should be handled this way. Firstly, the impact on the education of present students should be considered. There should be a clear benefit if a school is to be closed. Secondly, what impact will the closure or consolidation have on the community it serves? A school is a very important anchor in many areas, especially small rural towns. The population prospects of any school in this position should be evaluated realistically. This examination should include medium term expectations and the state of schools that border the subject school. Finally, monetary matters must be considered. While it is relatively simple to mount a case for the closure of an older school, the ongoing costs of closure cannot be ignored. As an example, sending students from a rural school to a neighbouring institution incurs an ongoing transportation cost which will only increase. Harder to quantify is the ecological cost of more buses on the road for longer periods of time. I see the whole issue as a complex one to be approached with the greatest circumspection.”</p>	<p>“It is my understanding that education in a Catholic school is a right constitutionally guaranteed to members of that church. I would not presume to infringe upon that right without the express consent and agreement of the Catholic community. If it were possible to amiably establish one system, the potential advantages are substantial, but the pitfalls are equally great. It has been my experience with previous amalgamations that the expected efficiencies are never realized. As a former teacher with the Elgin County School Board, I anticipated a reduction in board supervisory and support employees after the move to TVDSB. I stand to be corrected, but I do not believe this to be the case. It should be realized that any savings from such a move will likely come in the form of teaching staff reduction. This is regrettable, but unavoidable I believe. One Public System would require a revisitation of school board structures.”</p>	<p>“If a violent incident happens, the matter should be dealt with immediately. (This is not always currently the case.) The individual involved should be excluded from contact with other students/teachers until the matter is resolved. The teacher/board employee responsible shall provide an account (preferably written) of the incident as soon as possible. The administrator involved shall review the employee report, the student account and any other evidence (such as the student's OSR) before imposing consequences. Those shall take effect immediately. If the matter is undisputed, a report outlining incident and consequences will be included in the student's OSR forthwith. If there is evidence of a criminal offence, the police will be contacted. All the board employees likely to contact the student should be notified as soon as possible. Before the student returns to school a plan must be formulated outlining the nature of past events, a forecast of future behaviour and actions known to trigger unacceptable behaviour. Before returning, the student will take responsibility for their actions and undertake to refrain from future unacceptable behaviour. If the student is unwilling to provide those assurances, they shall be excluded from the regular school body. It is important to note that there must still be some allowance made for the student's education, regardless of their attitude or behaviour.”</p>

	Mental Health	Education Privatization	Why do you want to become a TVDSB Trustee?
Peter Rocchus	<p>“The consequences of poor mental health extend to all areas of a person's life. Therefore, any initiatives to help individuals cope in an educational setting must support and be supported by actions in the rest of society. By itself, the education system can do little of value. Having said that, I believe that student mental health can be best supported by advocating for the right of teachers to support their students. Many forms of mental illness prevent the student from doing their best because they are unable to focus on school work. The teacher may be able to devise alternate ways and means to assess the student, but their efforts are hampered by board wide policies on late submissions and standard evaluation. I believe that supporting teachers will ensure that students will be well supported. Classroom teachers see changes in behaviour which can signal declining mental health. Because of the bonds that they form with their students, teacher's concerns and offers of help are often more readily accepted. In short, the best people to look out for student needs are already on the job. The best thing that I or anyone can do is let them work without distraction.”</p>	<p>“From my present point of view, there is no place for privatization in education or any other public endeavour. By definition, a private corporation seeks profit. That profit is money diverted from the education system. While private companies promise facilities/services for less, they seem to deliver less for more cost. It seems to be the case that whenever privatization is implemented, wages drop and working conditions decline. Privatization in education should not be considered.”</p>	<p>“It is my intent as a candidate to promote more accountability on the part of the school board. Recent board decisions fly in the face of the public's thoughtful wishes. Even after the board was given a way to save face, they have maintained their plan. If possible, I would also hope to see greater autonomy for teachers in their classrooms and increased freedom for principals to manage their schools. I have seen both curtailed with disappointing results. This needs to change. Since no one else is offering to even try, I will.”</p>
	School Closure	One Public System	School Violence
Bruce Smith	<p>“I was a member of OSSTF for 15 years and the music teacher at AVSS from 1975 to 1990. I would like to look at the question as one of school renewal and revitalization rather than one of closure. First, the trustee has to be present. Last year we experienced the closing</p>	<p>“According to our local MPP here in Elgin, the merging of the Catholic and Public school systems is not on his government’s agenda. It was referred to as an idea of a couple of Western profs</p>	<p>“I discussed this with some staff and principals. It seems that the process as it now stands works, but there is too much paperwork causing a lag in communication from staff to admin and back to staff. It was suggested that the process be digitized with check and drop down boxes so</p>

<p>Bruce Smith</p>	<p>of Sparta-Union Public School in my area. Our trustees abdicated their role as a representative of the people. Second, the trustee is the one who makes the decision, not the board office administration. Thirdly, municipal councils must also be a major player in these decisions for they have a great deal of information regarding planned growth development for the area and know where school renewal needs to occur. In addition, we need to remove the muzzles from school principals and teachers and consider their input because they often have great ideas and the best firsthand knowledge of the area's student needs."</p>	<p>which is of no interest to them. So, the government may be "seeking efficiencies" but consider this to be a political mine field – a place they are willing to look."</p>	<p>that the staff report would go directly to admin and when admin. have dealt with the issue the report would be immediately available to the teacher. This way the teacher wouldn't be wondering if the problem was being dealt with or treated seriously and the student would not have to live in limbo waiting for resolution."</p>
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	<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Education Privatization</p>	<p>Why do you want to become a TVDSB Trustee?</p>
<p>Bruce Smith</p>	<p>"There is no magic answer to this problem. It is also not a new issue. The student I taught with the greatest need in this area, I taught in 1975 and 1976. My wife has spent her career as an RN on hospital mental health wards and my son is the manager of the Talbot Teen Centre in St. Thomas. We are very aware of the challenges and the growing needs. School staff and students must be made aware of the resources available to them such as the Talbot Teen Centre, Oxford-Elgin Child and Youth Counselling Centre, and Reach Out 24/7. I am also a strong advocate for "Bridges out of Poverty" and would like to promote an awareness of its strategies and goals it as a proactive measure to improve family and children's lives within our system."</p>	<p>"I feel that privatization within the system will lead to inequities and the inability to guarantee that the best possible programing is being delivered. I do not want privatization anywhere near the classroom. Attempts at privatization within the system involving maintenance and cafeteria staff were also problematic."</p>	<p>"First and foremost, my grandchildren are now entering the system and growing up in very different times. Their education, along with their peers, must reflect and prepare them to thrive in a global environment. Second, I have a great amount of experience teaching students from JK through to Masters students at the Don Wright Faculty of Music and teacher candidates at the Faculty of Education. I have Principal Qualifications. 15 years as a high school teacher and 18 years in the elementary system. At the university level I directed jazz ensembles at the Faculty of Music for 8 years and taught teacher candidates how to teach jazz one year at Althouse. Besides many years teaching music I spent three years as a Grade 6 classroom teacher. I think I have a lot to offer a board of trustees many of whom actually have very little experience in education other than they were once students. Third, I witnessed the closing and repurposing of several schools recently and I was disappointed by the management of the process. The</p>

			<p>enormous difference between rural and urban communities with regards to values, practices and needs seemed to be ignored. Our trustee largely went AWOL, said very little, and did not even attend all of the public meetings. This will not be the case if I am involved. Fourth, there are inequities in the education provided to our children across the TVDSB which need to be eliminated. As your trustee I will work to see that every child receives the best we can provide. Fifth, using the excuse of provincial funding formulas to support decisions that seem to put kids and families second is not acceptable. As your trustee I will challenge and change this practice. Lastly, I want to be the advocate for the people in the game who have their sticks on the ice so to speak, the students, the parents, and the teachers. These people are our first and foremost priority. They need to feel valued and completely supported in their work.”</p>
	School Closure	One Public System	School Violence
Chris Goodall*	<p>“I believe we need to ensure that our internal procedure meets the requirements set out by the Ministry. In addition our procedure that is updated needs to ensure that we have proper and fulsome consultations with all stakeholders, therefore in updating the procedure we need to include all input on how it should work and be carried out. A critical piece is the input of all Board staff especially teachers and support staff. Focus needs to be on doing what’s right for students and our school community.”</p>	<p>“Based on what I understand I believe it should be explored, I am in support of one public system. We need to ensure we have the necessary resources to do what’s best for students.”</p>	<p>“I am not sure what can or should be done to improve the process of reporting. I do feel we need to provide the necessary resources and controls to protect students and staff. I am open to ideas and ways that I can support this. This is not an area as a Trustee that I heard from front line staff.”</p>

	Mental Health	Education Privatization	Why do you want to become a TVDSB Trustee?
Chris Goodall*	<p>“I am an advocate for mental health in general especially given how it has impacted me personally. As a Trustee I would need help with what it is I could do. What can Trustees direct policy or budget wise to support mental health from TVDSB staffs perspective? What support and resources are required? This is an area I would love to get staff perspective on.”</p>	<p>“Good question, not sure I have a good answer. I think it depends on what the core business is for schools and the school boards. In some cases snow clearing and grass cutting can be done by our staff, in other cases there is a business case for that work to be contracted out. Media services, catering, and facilities it makes sense to have balance in that we have internal services but in some cases we may need to contract. I believe our core business is education and I am not in favour of contracting out teaching.”</p>	<p>“I want to be involved in my community and anything I can do to assist with providing the best for students in our Board. I would like to be a voice for all of our stakeholders in the community.”</p>