



THE SEINE SCENE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SEINE RIVER TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



On October 26, 2022, people living within the boundaries of Ward 3 of the Seine River School Division will be going to polls to choose three school trustees for their region. Candidates in Wards 1 and 2 have all been acclaimed. There will be an additional trustee appointed in Ward 2 at a later date.

The candidates in each region are listed below in alphabetical order by last name. Incumbents are indicated in *italics*.

Ward 1: *Wendy Bloomfield, Gary Nelson, Warren Reavely*

Ward 2: *Vicky Kiansky, Christine Roskos*

Ward 3: *Theresa Bergson, Katie Howe, Robert Rivard, Sajda Siemens, Lise Verrier, Trina Wall*

As we did during the last round of elections in 2018, we took the opportunity to ask the candidates a few questions on behalf of our Local members. You will notice slight differences in the questions to acclaimed candidates and those who will be elected by voters, but the questions themselves are consistent with all trustee candidates. **All opinions expressed are those of the candidates, and their responses appear unedited.**

Eight candidates chose to respond, and their responses are summarized on the pages that follow, in alphabetical order by last name. Gary Nelson (Ward 1), Warren Reavely (Ward 1), and Lise Verrier (Ward 3) did not provide a survey response.



Image credit: Edmond Dantès,
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/people-inside-a-voting-center-7103110/>

Wendy Bloomfield (acclaimed, Ward 1)

1. Why is it important that you were elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I am excited to continue to be a trustee in SRSD. I am always motivated by seeing the good work that we are able to achieve for kids through effective collaboration with all stakeholder groups. I believe it is good that I was re-elected to provide some consistency, history and experience as we come out of a rather tumultuous two and a half years and as we move forward with a new senior administrative team.

2. How will you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

As I have always done, I will continue to support the SRTA Professional Development Fund. I would be interested in seeing how SRTA might be interested in perhaps directing some of those dollars toward the role of educating teachers in how to ensure that the values of truth and reconciliation become embedded into every day school life, much as what occurred when character education was introduced a number of years ago.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

Good question. I personally am very passionate about and believe in "equity" over "equality" and would love to see a new \$2.0M directed to ensuring that "equity" is given more consideration in everything we do. Not sure exactly what or how it could be spent, but that would be the primary consideration for me.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

We are in the process of undertaking a substantial review of our policy manual, with the main objective to ensure that the policies are true statements of board belief and the procedures/regulations clearly direct how staff should implement the policies. We also need to determine gaps in policies; redundant policies and policies that need perhaps some minor rewording.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

I don't know if it's a lesson per se, however what I've learned and been most impressed with is how flexible and adaptable our schools and staff have been throughout the pandemic. I know at times it must have been such a struggle to "pivot" on a dime from one day to the next, and I'm sure there was a lot of anxiety behind the scenes, however what staff portrayed in the community and how they continued to support student learning was amazing.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

I have always participated in PAC committees and attended events wherever possible and I will continue to do that to the best of my ability. I am also extremely active locally with St. Norbert Arts Centre, which is connected to CSNC and am once again promoting that the SRSD Student Art Show be held at SNAC. We are in the planning stages for an outdoor learning centre at SNAC which would be open to SRSD schools. Also, as Chair of the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, I continue to advocate with our provincial government for more funding for schools and was pleased that the province recently awarded CNCM an additional \$1.3M in funding for school meal programs.

7. As someone who has been acclaimed as a Trustee, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

As a trustee who has been on the board for a number of years, and as the current Chair of the board, one of my first objectives is to welcome the new trustees and start building the board team to work collaboratively and respectfully with our admin team, schools and indeed all staff. I sincerely appreciate the honour and pleasure of serving on the SRSD board for another four years.

Theresa Bergson (candidate, Ward 3)

1. Why should you be elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

Having been a trustee for a few years has presented me with the opportunity to meet students and their families who may not always had the time to give to learn how a division works and the awful "f" word funding and its direct effect it has on shaping education. The continued struggle to meet needs that are unending for students and the balance of ensuring the students do have what they need to succeed. My initial motivation had always been trying to give each student the opportunity to experience education equality. As I have matured as a trustee I believe that equity is only achieved if we (all persons involved in that students education) understand that no child learns at the same pace. It's not a simple task. So as I hope to continue my role I hope to be part of a team of people who find that equity for each student no matter how it looks as it works for them.

2. How would you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

In regards of support to the educators, all of the people we consider as an educator, with the immense future of finding meaningful ways to engage our students. In understanding what the needs will be for reconciliation and understanding indigenous peoples. Our educational teams will need time and of course funding to do this. What that looks like right now I would say I'm going to be a student as much as the kids will be. However, I believe we have the people to start that journey and we certainly will need help to achieve success.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

Now 2 million dollars sounds like a lot of money but education is a hungry bottomless pit. It may sound odd but I believe that our wish lists are based on our collaboration and conversation we have with all our stakeholders. In my own thoughts I have to say I'd like more help in counseling, there seems never to be time or money for OT or hearing and speech assessments.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

I have been part of the governance committee we review many of the policies for the division yearly. That's said I suspect we will see some soon regarding truth and reconciliation. So it would be my thought we will need some help that way.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

What have I learned through the Covid times? Mostly that we need to be sensitive to all people's beliefs. We need to be as understanding as we can when we speak to those that may not always agree with what we need to do. Every day something was changing, everything that we may have felt common sense didn't always become the accepted. We did a pretty good job but I'm very sure that It was the toughest time for anyone involved in our schools. It was finding the balance while being mandated that I really learned from many sources it wasn't ever easy. As a present trustee we attend our pac meeting, Covid changed how we did that - zoom was my new word.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

You will find me at plays, in the gyms for basketball and gym riots. Sometimes I am lucky and get to read, that's the most fun I get as I usually bring props and those teachers whose spaces I have invaded have been so kind when I disrupt with books with fart noises. Next year is going to have big challenges. We are beginning our year with new administration in many places. We need to support these people as best we can. I also believe we will have a big learning curve heading our way with regard to reconciliation as well as still reminding the government our voices count at the local level.

7. If elected, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

To help orientation for our new trustees, it's a lot to consume all at once. Then I feel we need to see what our annual plan is and continue forward.

Katie Howe (candidate, Ward 3)

1. Why should you be elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I am motivated by our children and helping create the best educational system for them and for every student in SRSD. I should be elected because I am passionate and dedicated to be a logical voice that represents positive change for the future.

2. How would you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

We can respect the past while moving forward together. Teaching equality and helping the next generation grow together united. Acknowledging that no country is without its negatives, while focusing on the positives and growing together. Canada is a great country and I'm proud to call it my home.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

As a new member I would solicit the constituents and school administration for feedback on what is most needed. For now, I would look at improving the transportation systems because there are children who are on the bus for far too long. I would look into expanding the High School Apprenticeship Program (HSAP) because I feel that more students will be looking to enter into this in the upcoming years as oppose to going into college

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

Policy IIBG pertains to the internet however there are no policies regarding the books available in the library. #8 states inappropriate access to material, which looking in some libraries I have come across books that I feel are inappropriate and do violate the criminal code 152.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

I see now that the overreacting to the pandemic hurt children and adults alike. One size fits all lockdown measures should never be applied again. Concentrated protections to the most vulnerable in society is where we should focus. The federal government is now investing hundreds of thousands of dollars examining the lockdown harms on children. We failed them. Rather than following the example of countries like Sweden who did very well and never closed schools, we took a sledgehammer approach and hindered many students.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

When I was out door knocking I came across a group of parents who got together for coffee with either, their Reeve or Counsellor once a month. I love that idea and would attend if invited for sure. Also being visible in person meetings, at local events going on in the ward & social media outlets.

7. If elected, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

To review & vote on policies established by prior trustees. Also I know that the board works together as a team and I would like to get to know the other trustee members.

Vicky Kiansky (acclaimed, Ward 2)

1. Why is it important that you were elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I am a huge advocate of education and am excited to again be able to participate on the school board. Using my experience, education and passion to provide valuable input into our division's culture and values and both representing and sharing information is important to me and important in building community and our future leaders. Our students are what motivates me to be part of the larger picture as we work together to build a strong, inclusive division.

2. How will you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

Indigenous reconciliation is so important in our country, our communities and in our schools. We need to not only acknowledge the past but also work towards a better future. I would like to see Indigenous reconciliation a part of the board's strategic plan for the next term to ensure it is incorporated in the work we do and where applicable consult with Indigenous communities. I would also advocate for Indigenous reconciliation training for ALL educators and support additional professional development in this area.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

I would use the grant to implement additional proven, forward-thinking projects that work to close achievement gaps such as our Kids At Play program for kindergarten classes. Additionally I appreciate and would support implementing programs that help children develop important life skills such as Kelso's Choice, that focuses on conflict management skills for our elementary students.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

In general there is room for improvement in all the Division's policies and regulations. As a parent or staff person, it is important that policies are easy to find and easy to understand. There has been a lot of great work and value in the policies that exist but I'm excited to see a more user-friendly policy manual for all staff, students and parents that are based on the values of the division and provide clear consistent direction.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

I think the pandemic has taught us many things but the biggest takeaway I have learned is that although we may or may not agree with our neighbour, we are all still human and regardless of where our opinions lie what is important is how we treat people we disagree with. We can voice our opinions and disagree with someone and still love them, be kind to them and still be respectful and that is something I hope we can continue to teach our children.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

I am looking forward to continue representing ward 2. As always, I am open to hearing ideas, concerns and/or questions from the communities I represent, whether through phone or emails. I also enjoy attending the Parent Advisory Councils as it's a great opportunity to share information from the Board and also hear from parents. I am excited to start attending community events and see friendly faces again as we begin to transition back to regular activities.

7. As someone who has been acclaimed as a Trustee, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

My first priority will be to ensure that the board holds a strategic planning session to not only outline the board's priorities for the division for the next 4 years but the strategic plan will also hold us accountable to those priorities and allow us to continuously monitor progress, actions and outcomes.

Robert Rivard (candidate, Ward 3)

1. Why should you be elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I am running for school trustee because I feel that I have a lot to offer to the system. I have 24 years of experience as a trustee in SRSD. I have also served as President of MSBA and on the executive of CSBA. Most importantly I still feel we all have to work to make our very good education system even better. We can always work to improve.

2. How would you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

I would like to say that this is very important work that our education system must do and must do right. I would try to make sure that the resources, both financial and physical, would be available to our SRSD educators.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

The very first thing I would do is to find out from the educators and parents of SRSD what they would see as the greatest need. I would never pretend that I am the expert with all the answers, but I do know who to talk to and how to find out what would be the best way to get the most out of the money.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

There are always policies that need to be updated and improved on. Right now, I don't know of specific policies that need improving but I am willing to look at them all.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

I have learned that our division handled the situation very well. I believe the best possible. Mask wearing and social distancing were and are very important. Remote learning was needed but I believe we have learned that it is far from the best. The best education is in class, and in front of a teacher. If we ever need remote learning again we would have to make sure there are more resources available to our teachers and staff.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

I have always been and would continue to be very visible in my ward as well as throughout the division. Trustees must attend school events and make themselves available to meet and hear from parents and educators.

7. If elected, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

I do not have a burning first priority but would always strive to do what will help SRSD to be one of the best divisions in the province. And to make our provincial system one of the best in Canada.

Christine Roskos (acclaimed, Ward 2)

1. Why is it important that you were elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I think it's important that in this time of change with a new administration team we have some continuity on the board. I am excited to be a part of growing and learning together with this new team. I advocated for local voice and local choice during the time of Bill64 and I want to continue to be a part of that for our division. As with everything that I do and strive to be, my motivation is my kids. I want to lead by example for them. I want them to see it's important to be involved in building community, giving back and volunteering.

2. How will you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

My role as a board member will be to ensure that our educators have the resources needed to continue on the path to learning and reconciliation. It needs to be woven into our culture. We at the board level need to lead by example and be on this same path.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

I would put these funds towards mental health and wellbeing for both our staff and our students. Over the last couple of years, our kids and ourselves have faced a lot of challenges and not everyone has had the same supports to overcome these challenges. To be able to get to a better place of learning, we need to focus on the creating safe places for our kids to improve their outlook.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

We are currently looking at the overall structure of our policies and procedures and our governance model. To lead and to support our educators, our administration and our students / school communities we need to have a strong governance model and reviewing our policies to ensure they are current and meet the needs of our division. There are certainly a couple policies that need to be addressed sooner rather than later including our transportation policy. We received a presentation from SRTA representatives in the springtime on improving and enhancing our Safe Schools / Communities policy and supporting transgender and gender diverse individuals in our schools. I look forward to working on this as it impacts greatly the mental wellbeing and wellness of our school community.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

I have learnt a lot about resiliency. Our staff and our students have faced a lot of challenges throughout the pandemic and have shown me how to adapt, pivot, accept and overcome. As difficult as this time has been I think it has made us all a lot stronger and we will be better equipped to face future challenges. As a mom it has taught me a lot about how important teachers are to our kids.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

I will attend as many PAC meetings as possible in my ward. I feel that is a good way to meet with the parents in our schools and be visible to them and gives them an opportunity to ask questions and bring forward concerns. I also try to be involved with my kids' school and their PAC's as this helps keep me connected. With the start up of the SRSD Student Trustee Board, I look forward to connecting with the students through this association.

7. As someone who has been acclaimed as a Trustee, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

My first priority will be to welcome and connect with our new board / trustees. I think its important that we connect and get to know each other's perspectives and to connect with our administration and our educators. We will be faced with a change in the funding model from the government that may bring challenges to continue to offer the programming and services throughout our division. I look forward to working with our admin and our educators to ensure that they have the resources needed to meet our kids learning and social wellbeing needs.

Sajda Siemens (candidate, Ward 3)

1. Why should you be elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I believe that it is all Canadian's responsibility to take part in the different levels of government. I believe schools can be better equipped to help prepare children for the future and the real world, I want to be a part of that solution.

2. How would you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

To continue to have a strong Canada, we must teach the next generation to unite and grow together, ensuring ALL children are treated equally. While its important to acknowledge our past, so that past mistakes don't happen again, it's also important to acknowledge that no country is without historical stains. Items for consideration:

- The recognition that the government played a pivotal role in the residential schools, students should learn that the government is not always fair and just. Teachers should encourage children to question things that don't seem right and encourage respectful debate, even when the point of view of students is not popular or differs from that of the teachers.
- All educators who educate our children on this topic should be required to read and understand the Truth and Reconciliation report. Students should be encouraged too as well.

At some point, we must move forward. Canada is a great country and has a lot to offer, we should be teaching our next generation to be optimistic, proud and love the country that they live in. I am proud to be a Canadian.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

Since I would be a new addition to the board and lack a history of what is most needed within the division, I would solicit the constituents and school administration for feedback first and foremost. One concern that I have heard several times during campaigning that I would dig deeper into is the lack of trades education offered locally for students. Outside of the apprenticeship program offered at St Anne's School, students who wish to work towards red seal designations must travel to Winnipeg (1 hour from La Broq), as at the current point, attending SRSS is no longer an option. This isn't realistic and is a disservice to children in this School Division.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

I have reviewed the policies and regulations; my first comment is that I can see that many have not been reviewed or updated for some time. It would be helpful to understand the schedule of how these policies are reviewed to ensure all are reviewed on a timely matter. Regarding the policy: REGULATION: IGAE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION – Potentially Sensitive Issues: I don't have any concerns about the policy itself, however, I will comment, that the link provided in the policy (<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/parents/pehe.html>) that is designed to provide a curriculum outline is vague at best, it doesn't include details what is actually being discussed in the classroom. Many constituents that I have spoke with in the division believe that overall transparency between the school and parents must be improved.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

I have learned that when people fear death more than anything else, everything and anything is fair game to ensure their protection and protection for those that they love. Using a broad brush approach to responding to the pandemic regardless of risk and age stratification has hurt children and adults alike. Many medical studies are now being released showing the irreparable harms of lockdowns – speech delays due to masking, increased suicide rate, all time record high levels of depression, lost years of life and mental health deterioration etc. I hope that in the future, we review the past repercussions of how we responded to this pandemic to avoid making the same mistakes. We must do better.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

I plan to use a mix of social media and in person meetings at local festivals, council meetings and events.

7. If elected, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

My first priority, along side of getting to know the priorities of the division's stakeholders, would be to learn the overall governance model of the school divisions, both locally and how it operates in relation to the province.

Trina Wall (candidate, Ward 3)

1. Why should you be elected to the SRSD Board of Trustees? What motivates you to be part of the Board?

I should be elected to SRSD board of trustees because I have experience as a trustee. It takes time to develop relationships and trust and I have done both these past 4 years. What motivates me to be a part of the board is that children are our future and I want to be an advocate for our students of SRSD. I also want to be an advocate for our staff as I myself understand what it's like to work as an educator. I am passionate about all aspects of education and I am a lifelong learner.

2. How would you support SRSD educators in their role teaching children about our history, and our future, as it pertains to reconciliation with Indigenous communities?

In regards to supporting educators in their role with reconciliation I will continue to support the various activities and teaching currently being done. I would like to see any financial support as necessary to allow for guest speakers and cultural events to continue across the entire division. Educating students about Indigenous culture is important in order for them to understand why reconciliation needs to happen and how the Indigenous communities have been affected.

3. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it, and why?

Well, \$2 million seems like a lot but yet at the same time not. I would like to use it to help build a dual track High School in Ste. Anne. It is central and will alleviate the long bus routes from those in the far east end. It will also allow for growth and expansion of the already full SAE/SAI buildings and they would then be able to spread out and move into the current high school. Another option is that I would love to use the money to upgrade any computer needs we have as technology is constantly changing and we want to equip our students and staff.

4. Are there Board policies that need to be improved on? If so, why?

Board policies can always be looked at and improved upon as with time needs may change. Any suggestions parents and teachers have they can always be brought forward and looked at to be changed/updated.

5. What lessons have you learned from schools/teachers/others as we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic?

The pandemic was difficult to navigate for all schools, teachers, students, and parents included. Everyone needed to be flexible and constantly changing. Teachers had to learn how to teach and deliver in new ways as did the students. Getting technology going and accessing it, and learning new programs was difficult and required a steep learning curve for some. There were many different issues that arose and things that needed to be learned and they required some thinking outside the box to make happen. The pandemic stretched people. I think it has shown how resilient people are and how creative they can be. Also, people need to feel supported and seen for their efforts. Students and staff deserve credit for all the effort they put forth in navigating new territory.

6. How are you going to be visible and part of the ward you now represent?

I will continue to make myself visible by attending regular Board meetings, PAC meetings, and other special events put on by each of the schools. ie. band concerts, winter concerts, BBQ's, etc.

7. If elected, what will be your first priority as a school trustee?

My first priority is to support the staff and students in the areas of mental health, especially coming out of the pandemic.