

2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

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Do you identify as a member of a 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

Yes

What role are you running for?

School Board Trustee Kitchener

What do you believe are the most critical issues for the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community? If elected, how would you work with the local community to address these issues?

I believe representation and acceptance are key and critical issues for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. I know they were issues for me growing up, and they are concerns for my little (who identifies as part of the community too). Encouraging community involvement within schools and providing information and safe spaces for students to connect with peers and mentors as they navigate their school experience is how I would begin to address the issues, as well as continuing to end hate speech at board meetings and in schools through policy.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training?

Yes. As a newly minted paralegal I have up to date Diversity, Equity and Inclusion competency training, and as an elective I have sought out the content and module trainings from Renee Bazile-Jones, Camille Dundas, and Dr Lisa Ndejuru. Learning is a lifelong journey so I make an effort to be inclusive and knowledgeable.

Systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in our community, resulting in significant socioeconomic disparities within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia?

As an openly queer candidate, I am running on a platform of tolerance and visibility. If elected I plan on moving to expand on the existing Student Nutrition Program, and altering the fee schedule of the programs that require students to pay in order to participate to a "pay what you can" model to encourage the participation of all students.

If elected, how would you address the ongoing issues of homelessness and mental health, especially as they disproportionately affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

If elected I would add more subsidies to the student clubs to encourage participation, and add specialized trainings to the support staff, specific to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and how to support students from queer families, and who are exploring their own identities.

Do you agree with the statement that "trans rights are human rights, and must be protected as such?"

Absolutely.

When thinking about our schools, do you agree that 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in books and lessons is critical at all grade levels? How would you support 2SLGBTQIA+ students in schools?

Representation is necessary and important, and should be normalized, just like hetero folk and relationships are normalized. When kids at very young ages have 2SLGBTQIA+ parents and siblings, or are 2SLGBTQIA+ themselves, never seeing it represented and never being given facts makes the concept taboo and detrimental to their social and psychological development.

When parents are conditioned to believe anything other than their own relationships are wrong, that messaging can get passed on to their kids. Without books and lessons at all grade levels, this can teach hate from a mild level to an extreme level. It can teach anger and hate towards people outside the heteronormative spectrum, and it can teach kids to hate themselves if they want to explore their own feelings but have been given the message that it is "wrong".