

2011 - 2012

P.A.C.

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ALL CANDIDATES NIGHT
(Tuesday, September 27, 2011)

~ Questions & Answers ~

October 3, 2011

#1

ALL CANDIDATES NIGHT

Tuesday, September 27, 2011

"Hosted by your O.E.C.T.A., Halton Elementary Unit"

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTION #1

DO YOU SUPPORT THE CONTINUED PUBLIC FUNDING OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS?

ANSWERS:

KARMEL SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- *Question was directed at N.D.P. candidates only.*

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- *Question was directed at N.D.P. candidates only.*

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- *Question was directed at N.D.P. candidates only.*

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- Absolutely, positively yes.
- Party does not support abolition of funding.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- Yes.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- Great majority of the party is in favour of the current model.
- We are in favour of protecting G.S.A.'s in our schools.

QUESTION #2

WE ARE IN THE LAST YEAR OF OUR 2ND P.D.T. AGREEMENT IN EIGHT (8) YEARS. THIS HAS LED TO STABILITY AND HARMONY IN OUR PROFESSION. IF ELECTED/RE-ELECTED, WILL YOU SUPPORT A NEW P.D.T. AGREEMENT COMMENCING IN THE FALL OF 2012, AND WILL YOU INSIST IT INCLUDES FAIR AND EQUITABLE PAY RAISES, BASED ON CURRENT PROVINCIAL SETTLEMENTS?

ANSWERS:

KARMEI SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- We are fighting for the same cause.

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- Our job is to strike the best job for taxpayers as possible.
- We expect O.E.C.T.A. to bargain hard as well.
- "I" respect collective bargaining.
- I come from a background that respects this.

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- Our party believes that the best deals are reached at the collective bargaining table.
- Very much in support of people coming together and reaching a deal.

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- As a school board trustee, I walked on the picket lines... due to our children lacking E.A.'s support in the classroom.
- I was never easy at the table though.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- I am strongly in favour of collective bargaining.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- Teachers aren't the only ones involved in the school system.
- We will not allow them to be called an essential service.
- We don't want a strike.

QUESTION #3

IF ELECTED/RE-ELECTED, WILL YOU PROCEED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM, DELIVERED BY CERTIFIED TEACHERS, TO FULLY REALIZE ITS SHORT AND LONG TERM ECONOMIC BENEFITS?

ANSWERS:

KARMEL SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- **First of its kind anywhere in North America.**
- **We are committed to a model that has E.C.E.'s and certified teachers.**
- **We will be creating new positions for 3,800 Elementary teachers.**

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- **I chaired the child care committee because I had a child that needed child care.**
- **I am so proud of the maturity level of both professions and how they understand that there is a role for both to play (E.C.E.'s and teachers).**
- **Do what E.C.E.'s do best and leave the teaching to teachers.**

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- **It gives 4 and 5 year olds a head start.**
- **Children learn from an early age.**
- **It helps parents out, people with difficult lives, such as single moms (parents) and saves up to \$6,500 per child.**
- **We are committed to a program model that uses certified teachers.**

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- **We support it along with teachers and the support of E.C.E.'s.**
- **The child care piece is a key component.**
- **The cost is prohibitive and I want to ensure that the model is fully implemented.**

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- **We would continue with teachers in kindergarten.**

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- **We are fully in support of all-day kindergarten.**
- **We want to make sure everything is fully implemented.**
- **The transition has been inconsistent across Boards.**
- **We want perfect, uniform access to kindergarten resources.**

QUESTION #4

IF ELECTED/RE-ELECTED, WILL YOU CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION TEAM, INCLUDING EMBEDDED ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES INTO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND PROVIDE MORE ANTI-BULLYING TRAINING FOR ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS?

ANSWERS:

KARMELO SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- We have worked hard to make schools safer.
- We included the definition of bullying into the Education act.
- We will continue to listen to you to make our schools safer.

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- I helped high school students to produce an anti-bullying video.
- I feel kids need to be informed and need to be involved in the message.
- Working with kids has allowed me to bring these issues to Queen's Park.

INDIRA NADDOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- Safe schools, as a parent, is something you worry about.
- I have covered many forms of bullying in my career as a journalist.
- As a society, we need to stay on top of this.

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- We need to ensure that our schools are properly staffed, including teachers and support staff.
- We need to embed early interventions before situations escalate.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- We need to help our students to be the best they can be.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- Every student has the right to a safe and intimidation free school.
- We support G.S.A.'s.
- Bullying is the scourge of schools.
- We will support codes of behaviour with consistency with properly implemented sanctions.
- We will expand anti-bullying training to students, teachers and parents.

QUESTION #5

SIMILAR TO THE CLASS SIZE CAP OF TWENTY (20) STUDENTS FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 3, DO YOU SUPPORT REDUCING CLASS SIZES FROM GRADES 4 - 8 TO HELP IMPROVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT?

ANSWERS:

KARMEL SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- We have done this without losing a day to strike.
- We value the role you play in their lives.

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- If there are two things I get thanked for, it is teachers coming up to me to say thanks.
- They see the practical benefits of the smaller class sizes.
- We are prepared to phase it in a financially responsible manner.
- It is my expectation that we do it in the senior grades.

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- We have always understood the importance of smaller classes.
- We are committed to reducing the classes in the 4 – 8 groups.
- We are committed to doing more.

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- As hard as it is for Boards to manage split classes.... I'm a huge proponent of a hard cap class size.
- As for grades 4 – 8, we need to get there sooner rather than later.
- We are setting them up for failure as they leave the primary/junior model.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- We need to cap the system sooner, rather than later, and look at keeping our schools open and in their communities.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- Smaller class sizes are always better.
- Instead of a two year teacher education program, smaller classes would deal with the teacher surplus and the class size program.

QUESTION #6

SCHOOLS ARE RELYING MORE AND MORE ON FUNDRAISING AND STUDENT FEES TO SUPPORT SCHOOL PROGRAMS. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW REGARDING THIS?

ANSWERS:

KARMEL SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- We have worked hard with E.T.F.O. to reduce the gap between Elementary and Secondary funding with smaller classes.
- We will continue to consult with our teachers to ensure we develop the right plan.

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- It is important to differentiate between a school that wants to raise funds and needs to raise funds.
- What students need should be provided free of charge.
- I don't want to stand in the way of fundraising that would allow students to go on a trip, just no fundraising for the basics.

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- When it comes to core funding, we are there.
- Fundraising proceeds should not be used for core funding.

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- Boards and schools should not have to raise funds to provide students and teachers with the funds for them to teach and learn.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- Regulations state that no student can be excluded due to an inability to pay.
- Fundraising is driving a growing divide between schools where some can raise more than others.
- This is untenable.
- We need to come up with something that will allow schools to share these resources.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- The Ministry of Education is clear that you cannot charge extra course fees.
- Why is this not being implemented?
- Some school boards do this; others do not implement this regulation.
- Why is this not done across the board?

QUESTION #7

IF ELECTED/RE-ELECTED, WILL YOU MAINTAIN INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION TO MAXIMIZE OUR POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH AND RESIST CUTTING OR OVERHAULING A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION THAT CONTINUES TO IMPROVE?

ANSWERS:

KARMEI SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- We don't fund schools in a vacuum.
- We started from day 1 investing in our schools.
- We've got the plan and the budget.
- We're continuing to invest in our schools, students and teachers.

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- We're the best publicly funded system in the English speaking world.
- Why do we want to change that?
- The proof is in the pudding – we've built schools.
- We have continued to invest during the recession and built new schools.

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- We upped the funding 9 times over the past years.
- We're still investing in schools; we're number 1 in the world for English speaking school systems.
- Our plan makes sense and we can pay for it.

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- I saw children falling through the cracks of the system under the Harris regime.
- We're failing our kids - the tests are up but I'm not seeing the critical thinking scores of our kids going up.
- We will maintain the investment in education – we want to increase it.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- We shouldn't use a recession as an excuse to steal money from our kids.
- We can find that money by limiting high-priced consultants.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- We support fully-funded schools.
- It's about making sure every student has access to that school and the funding.
- We support robust funding.

QUESTION #8

IF ELECTED/RE-ELECTED, WILL YOU FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW AND CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT A POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PARTICULARLY WITH THE GOAL OF ELIMINATING CHILD POVERTY?

ANSWERS:

KARMEI SAKRAN/LIBERAL:

- We do have a child poverty reduction strategy.
- We look at a variety of indicators.....vision and dental care strategies; nutrition program – we are on the right track.
- Full-day kindergarten addresses child poverty, saving \$6,500 per year per child.

KEVIN FLYNN/LIBERAL:

- We need to set a goal and work toward the goal of reducing child poverty.
- In the depths of the recession, if there was an excuse not to start this program, we didn't.
- Every change we had to increase opportunity, we have, such as increasing minimum wage.

INDIRA NADOO-HARRIS/LIBERAL:

- 19,000 children have risen out of poverty.
- We've raised the minimum wage 11 times.
- Moving the minimum wage has seen a single mom gain \$10,500 as a result.

PEGGY RUSSELL/N.D.P.:

- Poverty has increased while Quebec and the Atlantic provinces has decreased.
- The N.D.P. is committed to affordable housing and getting people back to work in the province.

LESLEY SPRAGUE/N.D.P.:

- We need to help families face real issues like the security of housing.
- We will build 14,000 units over the next 4 years.

NIKOLAS SPOHR/N.D.P.:

- We are going to provide the housing benefit and new affordable housing.
- We'll introduce an adult emergency dental program.
- We forget about Ontarians with disability and end the claw back on O.D.S.P. benefits.
- We must make an equitable society.