

Parkland Local #10 Political Engagement Report: May 2024

It has been a year of continual inflationary pressures not only on our wallets but also on our time, our energy, and our capacity within the classroom.

I heard at my meeting in the fall that the government was taking a less adversarial tone. Working groups on class size and composition, a walking back of the social studies curriculum seemed to indicate that advocacy was moving the needle with the government.

Polling (Janet Brown) reported that people still have a strong view of public education (counter to noise). $\frac{3}{4}$ of Albertans feel class sizes are too big, and $\frac{2}{3}$ don't believe the government is spending enough on public schools.

The ATA has made big media buys to try to raise the profile of public education with Albertans. The "stop the excuses" campaign has a \$1M cost.

Over the winter and spring we saw the planned anti-trans policies which will target our young people and confound our ability to support, encourage and build relationships with these vulnerable students in our care.

On our home front in PSD we analyzed the divisional "Guarding Minds at Work" staff wellness survey – which showed that teachers are not coping. When broken down by staffing category (Lead Team/Teacher/EAs/Other Staff), teachers scored lowest by far – an average of 57%. This is compared to 62% for EAs, 61% for other staff, and 79% for our Lead Team colleagues. Teachers reported in the 40-50% range for psychological/social support, and recognition and reward. We scored 35% for balance. The teachers aren't alright – I hope to see this addressed in an earnest way in the coming year.

I attended an NDP leadership panel at the spring LPEO meeting, where a fiery Sarah Hoffman tried to get Naheed Nenshi to commit to remove funding to all private schools. His deft sidestepping of the question was an indication that he was trying to present as a more centrist option. All voices here were supportive of the work of teachers, with vocal support for collaborative work on curriculum, the importance of funding/EAs/teacher working conditions.

It will be a challenging year of central table bargaining, where we might need to use our teacher voices if we hope to move the needle.

Respectfully submitted,

Reuben Mahaffy

Parkland Local 10 LPEO