

Proper resources key to a good education: trustee candidates

By Brock Weir

Student success begins in the classroom, according to hopefuls wanting to advocate for local students, families, and schools at both the York Catholic District School Board and the York Region District School Board.

Several candidates seeking your vote to be that voice participated in an all-candidates' debate hosted by the Aurora Public Library at Aurora Town Hall on Sunday afternoon.

Seeking your vote for York Catholic District School Board trustee are Elizabeth Crowe and Mark Sullivan. Although Mr. Sullivan was not in attendance, Ms. Crowe stressed the impact proper supports in the classroom can have on a student's future.

"I have been a trustee for 20 years, but I have also been Chair of the Board for the past 16 years, and I thank my fellow trustees for their confidence in my leadership style," said Ms. Crowe. "I bring a wealth of experience and a proven commitment to building a strong Catholic school system in York Region.

"I am running for another four year term because I truly believe that all children are uniquely created in God's image and can be successful if supports and resources are in place to create a safe, nurturing classroom. If elected, I am committed to passing budgets that direct as much money as possible into the classroom. I will continue to lobby the Provincial government for adequate funding for special education. My experience at the board table and the respect of my fellow trustees will ensure the unique nuances and needs of every school community continues to be respected on what initiatives and policies are developed."

This focus on the individual student was one shared by Alex Noudelman. The King resident is one of three candidates vying to serve as Public School Trustee for the coming term.

An educator with over five years' experience in the classroom, including with Associated Hebrew Schools, Mr. Noudelman spoke of his work with one particular Kindergarten student he mentored after being diagnosed with severe autism. Working together, he helped him transition into higher grades, giving Mr. Noudelman a perspective on students with "various exceptionalities."

"My experience...has taught me that all students need differentiated instruction and will benefit from more resources in the classroom, as well as well-trained teachers," he said. "I am an advocate for differentiated instruction because everyone needs equitable and inclusive learning, as well as small classrooms. I promise to work with all administrative staff in my area to allocate funds for conferences and expert guest speakers on professional development days who will better equip our teachers to better meet our children's needs."

For fellow candidate Liliana Usvat, support should also be advocated for after school as well. The Aurora-based engineer said more should be done to foster mathematical and technical clubs in local schools.

"I would like to promote more technical clubs, more mathematical clubs that would offer programs in the YRDSB," she said. "I would like to see a larger number of students participating in mathematics competitions, students that participate in their international math competitions. I would like to see more technical clubs where each student at the end of high school should be able to build a website, should be able to create a basic one where he or she can promote their services, and have a basic knowledge."

Incumbent Peter Adams-Luchowski, who was appointed to the position over two years ago following the resignation of Gord Kerr, said his own priorities are "encapsulated" in the Board's Multiyear Plan, that prioritizes decisions.

"Education can be emotional, issues come and go, and the most important quality in a board member is to keep an open mind and ask questions," he said. "It is also critical to be able to work together in everyone's best interests as trustees are effectively responsible for decisions made in other areas of the Region outside our own. We all have to work together."

?One of my accomplishments is I was able to pull off getting trustees to support an investment in Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School to restore that to a fine learning institution. I have the ability and proven I have what it takes to represent.?