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Edmonton Trustee Candidates Fail to Pledge Support for Evidence-Based Sexual Health Education

Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition is seeking to strengthen school-based sexuality education by asking that trustee candidates pledge to support evidence based sexual health education taught by responsible professionals and, in turn, encourage students and families to have open discussions about their values and decision making.

It is alarming that **over 50%** of the Edmonton Public School Board trustee candidates and **none** of the Edmonton Catholic School trustee candidates pledged support for evidence-based health information. **Fifty percent** of the candidates seeking re-election **failed to pledge**.

Students at École Secondaire Notre Dame High School in Red Deer attended a presentation in March 2017 that exploited the horrific genocide of Jewish people and others to promote fundamentalist Christian anti-choice propaganda.¹ Other schools across Alberta have mistakenly invited anti-choice organizations to teach sexual health education, unaware that agency affiliations prohibit counseling contraceptives or even recognizing same sex relationships as valid.² “There is no place in the classrooms of 2017 for organizations that exist to undermine the rights that women and LGBTQ+ “ said Melanie Anderson, Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition board member.

“Edmonton Public School Board updated their sexual health policy and guidelines to ensure students receive comprehensive, evidence-based information taught by qualified instructors and we want to make sure that this policy³ is protected” said Kathy Dawson, Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition board member. Incoming trustees must be committed to:

- ✓ Comprehensive sexual health programs as the standard in this school division. In turn, encourage students and families to have open discussions about their values and decision making.
- ✓ Sexual health education that upholds the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Alberta Human Rights Act. Specifically, sexual health education must be inclusive of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, and disability.
- ✓ The teaching of consent.
- ✓ Evidence-based sex education provided by qualified guest presenters. Support vetting of third party presenters to ensure that information is agenda free, medically accurate and inclusive.
- ✓ Supporting curriculum for sex education across Alberta that is comprehensive, medically accurate, evidence, based, and inclusive.

“We look forward to renewed commitment to evidence based education and ask each trustee candidate to make this pledge⁴ so that voters are fully informed” said Dawson.

Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition is a grass roots organization formed to protect and support sexual and reproductive health rights in Alberta. We encourage voters to demand trustee commitment to sexual health education that is accurate, complete and free of bias.

Media Inquiries:

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¹ “Alberta Catholic high school under fire for pro-life presentation comparing abortion to Holocaust” by Emily Mertz, Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/3369064/alberta-catholic-high-school-under-fire-for-pro-life-presentation-comparing-abortion-to-holocaust/>

² “Statement of Principles”, Canadian Association of Pregnancy Support Services, Core Documents, Retrieved from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3knVGoGcpZkdI9MMVwVXFWUHc/view?usp=sharing>

³ “Parents’ Guide to Teaching Sexual Health, Edmonton Public School Board, Retrieved from <https://www.epsb.ca/ourdistrict/topics/sexualhealtheducation/>

⁴ Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition, Sexual Health Education Pledge Documents, Retrieved <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3knVGoGcpZkTEtoX3BxWUFSOWM?usp=sharing>