

Majority Of School Board Candidates Refuse To Answer Questionnaire Prepared By Teachers Of Michipicoten High

To generate some local election interest, the E.P.I.C. and S.C.O.P.E. committee of the local teacher federation recently prepared a questionnaire. A copy of this was delivered to each candidate for the Michipicoten Board of Education, with instructions that someone would return to pick up the questionnaire, two days later. It was indicated on the sheet, that the results would be published.

The form requested that the candidate select one of these responses: A — Fundamentally Agree; D — Fundamentally Disagree; O — No opinion: to the following five questions:

1. A broader selection of cultural subjects (such as Art and Music) should be offered in the Michipicoten Schools.
2. The class sizes in the Elementary Schools are too large to ensure quality education.
3. The Board should spend up to the maximum allowed by government grants.
4. The class sizes at the High School are too small.
5. The per pupil grants for elementary education should be increased towards the per pupil grant available for secondary education.

In addition, the candidates were invited to write a brief statement of their educational policy.

Ten of the Board candidates refused to respond to the questionnaire, citing among their reasons, that the questions were involved with negotiable items; the questions were too vague; the questions were too broad to be answered by a simple yes or no; the candidate did not have enough experience to answer, or the candidate intended to elucidate their philosophy at the public meeting.

Candidate, Bill Coffey responded to the questionnaire as follows: He fundamentally agrees with questions 1, 3 and 5. He responded with no opinion to 2 and 4 because he felt he was not familiar enough with the local situation.

Mr. Coffey further responded with this resume:

Reasons for running — 1. Life long interest; 2. Two boys presently in Michipicoten High School; 3. Training and experience would enable me to make a worthwhile contribution.

Views — ~~Education as a career for those who seek for a return to a more structured system with a strong emphasis on the basics, i.e. reading, grammar, and math. Children should also be taught values, responsibility and family living - budgeting, buying a house - raising children - concern for others.~~

This calls for an ongoing co-operative and co-ordinated team effort - Board, teachers, parents and students reaching down into the elementary system.

Experience: B.A.; 1 year elementary teaching; 8 years secondary teaching; 12 years social work experience - (7 of these years as school attendance counsellor for 8 elementary schools and 1 regional High School); 8 years operating Branch offices with full responsibility for all phases of child welfare; daily making decisions affecting the lives of children and families; a commitment to others.

Bill Coffey

Candidate, David Liddle did not answer the multiple choice questions because he lacked background statistics. He chose, rather, to express his views on the subjects in greater detail.

1. I believe that the primary and secondary education curriculum should help prepare our children and youth for the responsibilities they will face in their adult years. To complement vocation-oriented subjects should be an array of subjects pertaining to such things as cultural and physical education, effective verbal and written communication, household economies. I personally believe that Canadians generally lack an appreciation of culture, and for this to change, a greater emphasis must be placed on cultural subjects within our school system. I would prefer to see a compulsory core program throughout the system which would emphasize some of the above-mentioned topics.

2. Class size should be such that it allows for a good learning environment, freedom of expression by students, plus a certain amount of individual attention when necessary. The actual optimum class size will depend upon the age of the students, the diversity in intelligence and/or handicaps, the preferred teaching methods employed by the teacher, and the subject being taught. I suppose that the ideal PTR is 1:1; however, financial constraints must be recognized as a major variable in actual class size.

3. I believe that any agency or organization in Northern Ontario funded by provincial or federal funds should seek to use the maximum obtainable through government grants. In the event of penalties being imposed for overspending, a contingency of 5-10 per cent should be maintained. Where the allowable grant is directly proportional to the amount spent through local taxes, the amount spent must be

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3. I believe that any agency or organization in Northern Ontario funded by provincial or federal funds should seek to use the maximum obtainable through government grants. In the event of penalties being imposed for overspending, a contingency of 5-10 per cent should be maintained. Where the allowable grant is directly proportional to monies raised through local taxes, the amount spent must be determined by the ability of the taxpayers to pay. Notwithstanding the fact that local taxes are based on property assessment, in general I do not believe that the local tax rate should be raised at a rate greater than the average rate of increase in personal income.

4. At the secondary level, class size becomes more a function of the number of courses offered than the number of teachers available. In the event of financial constraints, I do not necessarily view a reduction in the number of subjects available as a decline in the quality of education. I should point out that, regardless of financial constraints, I would never vote in favour of anything which would jeopardize or compromise the quality of education.

Wherever possible, I prefer to see greater monies emanating from the provincial government into Northern communities, rather than coming out of the local treasury. Because provincial revenues are more closely tied to income than municipal revenues, only in this manner can we hope to reduce the disparities in wealth between the richer and poorer sections of the province. In other words, I favour higher per pupil provincial grants, since it ultimately means that the wealthy people and industries of Southern Ontario will be paying more towards the education of our children in Wawa.