

Bev Esslinger – Ward A

Bev Esslinger has been supporting children as a volunteer, foster parent, community member and Trustee for over 16 years. She is a former member of the Edmonton Public Schools' Key Communicators Advisory Committee and was a founding Board member of Safe and Caring Schools of Canada. Bev has also worked in finance and management for several non-profit organizations. She and her husband have been married 25 years and have two children. Bev enters her second term as Board Chair and plans to continue to advocate for sustainable funding for public education. She is devoted to working for the best interests of all students attending Edmonton Public Schools.

“Children are our most valued resource and should be encouraged and treasured! I believe that education is the cornerstone to a strong society and I am committed to keeping our public education system the best it can be.”

Ken Shipka – Ward B

Ken Shipka brings a varied perspective to his new role as a Trustee, having gained experience in both the political and business sectors. He holds degrees in education and commerce and has worked as a teacher and financial planner. Ken demonstrated his commitment to public service by running for city council in 2001 and the provincial government in the 2001 and 2004 elections. He has received a 10 Years Service Recognition award from NorQuest College for his dedicated teaching efforts. Ken is engaged to be married, looking forward to a wedding that is scheduled to take place in 2008. He believes in the importance of cultivating a healthy lifestyle for children, and supports implementing more life skill courses in our education system. As a Trustee, Ken is eager to help develop meaningful support for at-risk students and for children with disabilities.

“I hope my service as a Trustee will help to move our children’s education, health and well-being to new heights. My work is incomplete until our District can truly say that ‘no child is left behind.’”

Sue Huff – Ward C

Serving her first term as a school board Trustee, Sue Huff is a parent advocate and an award-winning artist and documentary writer. She holds a bachelor of arts degree and has worked for nearly two decades in the arts. Sue and her husband have two children, who are both enrolled in Edmonton Public Schools. Sue is dedicated to ensuring that the public has a strong voice in public education and that District decisions reflect the values of the community. She would also like to improve the success rate for all children, particularly those who are at high risk for not succeeding.

“It’s about building connections—students are most likely to shine if there is combined support from parents, teachers and the community.”

Dave Colburn – Ward D

Before seeking office as a school Trustee, Dave Colburn worked as a conductor and locomotive engineer with CN for 33 years. He is actively involved in education through school councils and several parent advocacy groups. Dave has been recognized for outstanding parent achievement for his role as founder and co-chair of “Literacy and Learning Day”(2003). Dedicated to improving the health of students, Dave approaches his second term with an even stronger resolve to eliminate the sale of junk food in schools, and to see physical fitness become a major part of public education. His daughter attends high school in the District. He is proud of the diversity and quality of programming Edmonton Public Schools presents to students, and hopes to work in partnership with key stakeholders to receive sustainable, sufficient funding to ensure student success.

“I hope our District will one day become a leader in the area of school health and I would like to see us make meaningful progress in identifying and supporting at-risk students while ensuring that all students receive the best education possible.”

Ken Gibson – Ward E

Returning for his second consecutive term as a Trustee, Ken Gibson brings over 20 years’ experience in business, government and professional trade associations. He has a master’s degree in agricultural economics from the University of Manitoba. Ken was the former president of the Alberta Food Processors Association and is currently the Executive Director of the Alberta Construction Association. A resident of Ward E for 13 years, Ken is married and has two sons who received their education in Edmonton Public Schools. A top priority for Ken is building partnerships with businesses and communities to harness additional resources to assist students and families. He is committed to advocating for smaller class sizes for students, and is a strong supporter of career awareness initiatives being promoted to high school students.

“I believe that sustained investment in public education is the foundation for building outstanding citizens and communities and is the cornerstone for the future prosperity of Alberta.”

Don Fleming – Ward F

Don Fleming brings a wealth of experience to his work as a member of the Board. He has served as Board Chair and Vice-Chair and spent several years as a high school teacher and department head. He also holds a master’s degree in communications, and worked for over a decade with the Public Affairs Bureau of the Government of Alberta. Don and his wife have three children who are all attending university. Through his work with the Board and as the president of the Public School Board Association of Alberta, he has come to be recognized as a determined advocate for public education.

“Edmonton Public Schools has a well-deserved reputation as an international leader in public education. My commitment is to work with the Board to build on that reputation for the benefit of our students and our community.”



Board of Trustees: (from left to right) Bev Esslinger (Board Chair), Ken Shipka, Sue Huff, Dave Colburn, Ken Gibson, Don Fleming, George Rice, Catherine Ripley and Gerry Gibeault (Vice-Chair).

George Rice – Ward G

George Rice is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan who has worked for over 30 years as a principal and associate superintendent in the District. His ongoing efforts to enhance the education of students have won him national and provincial recognition. In 2004, *Maclean’s* magazine named him a “Stellar Principal,” and in 2005, he was awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal. This past year, he was an Alberta Excellence in Teaching finalist. He is the proud father of twin daughters and just recently retired as principal of McNally School. George has also served as a member of the Canadian Army Reserve for over 35 years, retiring from the active reserve in 2003 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and Commanding Officer of The Loyal Edmonton Regiment (4PPCLI). Honored to be a new member of the Board, George is focused on reinforcing the successes and achievements of the District and improving leadership development in schools, and throughout the District.

“I believe that public education is the cornerstone to the success of our individual students, to our communities, province and nation.”

Catherine Ripley – Ward H

Catherine Ripley is the author of over a dozen books for young children, and has also enjoyed a successful editorial career with publications such as *Cricket*, *Chickadee*, and *Global biodiversity*. A graduate of Trent University, she currently edits a community league newspaper in southwest Edmonton. Married to her husband Bruce for 25 years, Catherine has three children attending different universities across Canada. Catherine was one of the founding members of the Whitemud Coalition of Schools, which presented issue-specific reports on education to elected officials from 1999 to 2004. As a new Trustee, she is committed to ensuring community members have a voice in shaping future directions for Edmonton Public Schools and an opportunity to help all students fulfill their potential and graduate successfully.

“I would like to ignite a passion for public education and to ensure that all learners are welcomed in our schools and have the opportunity to develop the talents, gifts and strengths they’ll need to be successful in their futures.”

Gerry Gibeault – Ward I

Serving his fifth consecutive term as Trustee, Gerry Gibeault’s dedication to public service has spanned over two decades. An MLA for Edmonton Mill Woods from 1986 to 1993, Gerry is a librarian by profession and has a bachelor of arts degree in economics from the University of Alberta. He also has a strong background in provincial and community politics. He served as Board Vice-Chair in 2005, and this year, was elected to revisit this role. Gerry and his wife have been married for 31 years. His goal as Trustee is to see the District make significant gains in high school completion rates and to gain broad public support for public education.

“It’s a great honor to be entrusted with the responsibility for the education of our community’s children. Working together, we can create a better future for all of us.”