

# Federal Election 2021

## Key Messages

### Education Priorities to Raise With Federal Candidates

On September 20, 2021, Canadians throughout the country will elect Members of Parliament (MPs). MPs are elected to represent the views of their constituents. The policies of government are far-reaching and affect everyone, whether or not they have children in the school system. While public education is a provincial government mandate, federal decisions directly impact public schools.

The Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) advocates for nonpartisan strategies to engage politicians in issues that affect public education and our children and youth. It is critical that trustees engage with candidates to help them understand and be prepared for critical decisions that impact public education.

#### Local Voices, Local Choices

- Democratically elected local school boards are essential to the continued success of public education.
- As evidenced by a recent literature review, it is clear that students benefit from the effective governance of local school boards.
- There is little research or evidence showing that alternative models have positive effects for students.
- All members of the House must stand up for democracy in Canada.

#### Indigenous Education

- Indigenous education is a responsibility of the federal government and must be a priority for the new government.
- The CSBA calls on all candidates to be champions of:
  - Increased support for Indigenous schools,
  - First Nations control of First Nations education,
  - The full implementation of the Indigenous Languages Act, and
  - Continued progress in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action Report.

#### Official Languages

- Ongoing support for French Minority Language education and French and English Second Language programs.
- Continued investment and collaboration to deal with the French Minority Language and French Second Language teacher shortages.

#### Youth Mental Health

- Mental wellbeing is critical to all Canadians, particularly children and youth.
- The Pandemic has increased the needs of those already facing challenges.
- We need consistent well-funded mental health services in every area of the country, including access and services in schools.

#### Connectivity

- The pandemic has heightened the need for reliable robust Internet access for all students and families.
- This is a particularly troubling issue for families that are already marginalized, including indigenous students and isolated communities.
- Although the federal government published a report supporting this need and announced funding, the timeline is too far out and the scope too narrow.
- It is simply critical that all communities and all families have reliable access to robust internet in order to learn and be successful.

#### Anti-Racism

- Candidates must acknowledge that systemic racism is a colonial legacy that exists within institutions throughout the country, including public education, and work with the education system to address this.
- We all must purposefully work together on both policy and practice to achieve equity for all by removing systemic barriers and exposing and addressing biases. To support this, we must be committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in our work.
- Inclusion is an active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege and build a respectful and diverse community that creates welcoming spaces and opportunities to flourish for all.

