



JERRY SODOMLAK Ward 1 Trustee & Board Chair

Jerry Sodomlak spent 32 years working in education. He wasn't about to leave it all behind when he retired.

The former teacher and principal wanted to continue to support quality learning environments for youth in his community, and give them every opportunity for success. It's why he chose to run for school trustee in 2014 and again in 2018.

As a father, grandfather, and community volunteer who has lived and worked in northeast Winnipeg most of his life, he also wanted to give back to the community and create a better place for children.

Being a school trustee requires him to look at things through a slightly different lens than in his previous role. His job is to balance fiscal responsibility and the

community's needs and expectations, against making sure the tools and resources are there to teach children in a safe, inclusive, and stimulating environment. Finding that fiscal and educational balance can be a challenge at times, he says.

There is an African proverb that says it takes a whole village to raise a child. It's a philosophy Jerry firmly believes in, rooted in part from his years working in schools. To create student success, he knows it takes the school, the division, and community stakeholders, including health, family servicers, and justice, to be actively engaged and co-ordinated in their efforts to support children and their families. The work must begin in early years, where the foundation for learning is laid, he says.

As a trustee, he enjoys learning about and supporting the initiatives staff are working on to build success for RETSD students both in and out of the classroom. Jerry says he values the candid discussions and debates with his fellow trustees and senior administration team at board meetings, where the need to consider both the fiscal and educational impact of those initiatives is critical.

The greatest satisfaction he gets as a trustee is when he sees students succeeding in every way—physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. As well, being able to work collaboratively with parents and community stakeholders to prepare our youth to be tomorrow's leaders. That success is a result of employees in every department within the division working together, taking pride in their role, and existing for the student, he says.