

Why I want to be an Indigenous Trustee

Breanna Roy

I want to make a change. I have so many ideas to make positive improvements within our school board for my fellow Indigenous peers. Going into high school I felt out of place when it came to my native culture. As I embraced my culture and proudly identified as Indigenous, negative comments and jokes were not uncommon. I am certain I am not the only Indigenous student who has faced this. This is why as Indigenous Student Trustee, I would encourage and push for projects to make my Indigenous peers have a different experience with their culture at school. A project such as; creating a program with the Indigenous student representatives of LDSB, which would entail going to elementary schools (specifically grade 7-8 classes) to discuss stereotypes and challenges Indigenous peoples face in Canada today. This will encourage students to be more aware of the impact their words have *before* they begin secondary school. These past couple years LDSB has made leaps and bounds making schools more Indigenous friendly, but there are still so many ways to improve. I truly believe that my generation will be the one to make a huge difference with acceptance and equality, I would love to be a part of that. Also, meeting my fellow Indigenous peers will be a great opportunity to figure out what I can do to help everyone else around me. As next year will be my last until post secondary, my goal will be to make opportunities for Indigenous students to learn about their culture and be in schools where they can fully embrace their heritage. We, as an Indigenous community, can figure out what can be improved within our school board and I'd be determined to make it a reality for you.

What would make me a unique candidate?

I have had many great experiences that would prepare me to take on this responsibility. For example, Spirit Council has been a great way to learn about the important lessons needed for a leadership role. My new responsibilities, should I get this position, would be similar to the ones I have gained from being on Spirit Council, in a sense that I listen to the voices of my fellow classmates so that our spirit days activities are just as what they envisioned. Another

opportunity I cherish is being the Indigenous Representative for my school. It is a position I hold with great pride. As much as COVID-19 has limited what I am able to do, I have strived to build many relationships with other Indigenous students. Without being the representative I would not have met my new friends. I have also been able to bring some Indigenous culture in my school, for example; the week I did morning announcements my theme was Indigenous voice. These roles have definitely made me less shy to go up and talk to someone that I have never had a conversation with before. I take every piece of wisdom from each opportunity that I am given to grow upon my leadership and communication skills, but also myself as a person.

Am I passionate about the student voice?

I think anyone who knows me would describe me as passionate. In everything I do, I always do it with great passion and determination, especially when it comes to listening to my Indigenous peers. In fact, my dream is to become a human rights attorney for Indigenous people and communities. Essentially, I want to hear Indigenous voices much like my own, and find ways to improve their situation and ways to help. Currently, I have the opportunity to make our schools a welcoming environment for students with Indigenous heritage and I could not be more thrilled to even be considered for this position. I plan to have meetings with the Indigenous Student Leadership Circle, whether it be on zoom or, if allowed, in person to be able to hear their voices. Quanah has been a great example of how to run those types of meetings and I will do my best to fill his shoes. I will attend any meeting necessary to make the student body heard where change is possible. I think hearing different opinions and making connections, big or small, will be crucial for students' voices to be heard loud and clear. Along with my passion, another skill I have is speaking. Whether it's babbling on for hours or public speaking, I am not shy to speak up and insert my opinion. That will be a very important skill to have if I were in a

position to make our opinions heard. I am very passionate about being the Indigenous Trustee for LDSB and I am sure I could succeed in this role if given the opportunity.

How do I envision myself making relationships with my Indigenous peers?

Building relationships is the essence of our culture. Story telling, singing, and trading are all ways our ancestors have taught us to build connections with each other. Those traditions are simply listening to others and with that comes educating yourself and opening your heart to someone else's life. In my opinion, building relationships is crucial to succeed in a leadership position. Everyone has something to say and as Indigenous Student trustee, it would be my job to build relationships with my peers by listening, understanding, and communicating. I would have meetings via zoom or in person to see the friendly faces of the Indigenous student voice. Although hearing about ways to improve the schooling of my Indigenous peers, getting to know them personally will make everyone feel even more heard and accepted. I would reach out and check in with my peers to make sure everything is alright. I make an effort to do just that with the Indigenous students at my school right now as Indigenous representative. I feel it is especially important to check in with friends, or even strangers, during this crazy time. Building relationships is about listening to others and appreciating what they contribute in their own unique way. That is exactly what I can offer.