

Masood Alam

1. What makes you qualified to be a Trustee in the TDSB?

I am highly qualified to serve as a Trustee for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) because of my extensive experience in education, community advocacy, and policy development. My multi-faceted background has allowed me to hone the skills necessary to effectively represent the interests of our community.

- As the Bridging Program Administrator at the Neighborhood Organization for Foreign Trained Professionals, I have successfully supported individuals in navigating their professional integration into Canadian society. This role has deepened my understanding of the unique needs of newcomers and the importance of educational programs that are tailored to diverse communities.
- For over seven years, I have taught free computer classes and online learning programs, running 42 batches, each lasting three months. These initiatives have directly benefited hundreds of community members, including foreign-trained professionals, seniors, and others. This hands-on teaching experience has provided me with valuable insights into the learning challenges and opportunities faced by our diverse student population.
- My involvement in educational leadership, including holding leadership roles in school councils across the schools in my neighborhood for over twenty years, has allowed me to build strong relationships with students, educators, and parents. This long-term engagement has given me a deep understanding of the daily challenges facing schools and the critical need for responsive, inclusive educational policies. As Chair of various School Councils, I have frequently written and submitted the annual School Statement of Needs (SSON) document to TDSB, outlining the priorities of our school communities when selecting principals.
- Additionally, I have a solid understanding of educational policy, budget management, and collaborative decision-making processes. These skills are essential for making informed, impactful decisions and ensuring that the voices of students, parents, and educators are heard and acted upon effectively.
- I am committed to ensuring that all students in our community have access to high-quality education and that their voices are represented in the decisions that shape their educational experience.

2. What is your connection to Don Valley West?

I have been a proud member of the Don Valley West community for over 20 years, living, working, and volunteering in the area. My deep and long-standing involvement has allowed me to gain a strong understanding of the community's needs, and I have dedicated myself to supporting and uplifting those who live here. Some key highlights of my community engagement include:

- **Founding Member and President of the Canadian Community Services Organization (CCSO):** Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been actively involved in supporting our community through initiatives such as monthly food drives, free Eid bazaars, annual back-to-school backpack events, and toy drives. Over 45 food drives, we

distributed over 150,000 pounds of food and served more than 700 families, including 3,000 children. I have also engaged over 100 residents, including 70 youth volunteers, in these efforts.

- **Founding Member of the Thorncliffe Residents Group:** I have worked to create a stronger, more united community in Thorncliffe Park, fostering collaboration and a shared sense of purpose among local residents.
- **Former Vice Chair and Co-Chair of the Toronto Police 53 Division Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), currently an active member:** I have contributed to initiatives aimed at improving safety and fostering positive relationships between community members and law enforcement.
- **Founding Member and Chair of the Thorncliffe Safety Committee:** As a sub-committee of the 53 Division CPLC, I have played a key role in promoting safety and building trust between the community and law enforcement by organizing several community safety programs, both in the neighborhood and in local schools.
- **Co-Chair of Neighbours Night Out in Thorncliffe Park:** For 13 years, I have helped organize this annual event, the largest community gathering of the year in Don Valley West. The event brings together local businesses, women entrepreneurs, and community members of all ages to celebrate with a day of fun, music, entertainment and a Bazar by small local businesses and women in the neighbourhood. Each year, we engage over 100 youth volunteers who contribute to the event and gain valuable community service experience.
- **Volunteer with Youth for Human Rights:** For more than three years, I have been raising awareness in the community, particularly among youth, about the 30 human rights as outlined by the United Nations and advocating to teach human rights as a curriculum at TDSB.
- These experiences have provided me with valuable insights into the educational and social needs of the families and schools in this ward, and I remain deeply committed to supporting this vibrant and diverse community.

3. What do you see as the most important role of a school trustee?

The most important role of a school trustee is to be a strong advocate for students, parents, and educators, while ensuring the effective and responsible governance of public education. This involves setting policies that are reflective of the diverse needs of the community, ensuring equitable access to high-quality education for all students, and holding the school board accountable for transparent, inclusive, and well-informed decision-making.

Trustees must be the bridge between schools and the community, fostering communication, collaboration and a shared commitment to student success. By listening to the concerns of parents, teachers, and students, trustees can work to ensure that all voices are heard and that the needs of the community are addressed in the educational policies and practices that are implemented.

4. What issues do you think need to be addressed most urgently?

In my opinion, several critical issues need urgent attention:

- **Student Success and Educational Opportunities:** Ensuring that all students have access to quality education that prepares them for success in universities, colleges, and the workforce is a top priority. This includes addressing the diverse needs of students to provide equal opportunities for achievement at all levels.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** The mental health and well-being of students must be a central focus. We must ensure that students have access to the support and resources they need to thrive both academically and personally, with equitable access to mental health services across all communities.
- **Supporting Teachers:** Teachers are essential to student success, and it is crucial that they are provided with adequate training, professional development, and resources to support their teaching. This will help ensure they are well-equipped to meet the needs of all students, including those with diverse learning requirements.
- **Responsible Budget Management:** Managing the school board's budget responsibly is essential to maintaining and improving school infrastructure, ensuring that our facilities are safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning.
- Additionally, it is critical to listen to the voices of students, parents, and educators to shape policies that reflect their needs and ensure that the education system is responsive and effective.

5. If elected, how much time are you prepared to dedicate to this position? How do you anticipate spending this time?

If elected, I am fully committed to dedicating the necessary time and effort to fulfill the responsibilities of a trustee effectively. This includes:

- Attending all Toronto District School Board and committee meetings.
- Actively engaging with school councils throughout the ward to stay connected with the community.
- Meeting regularly with parents, educators, principals, teachers, and caregivers to address concerns, improve school environments, and enhance student performance, particularly regarding EQAO results and students grades in exams.
- Staying well-informed about developments in education, both locally and provincially.
- I anticipate focusing my time on policy discussions, community outreach, and advocating for the needs of students and schools in Don Valley West.

6. Are you affiliated with a political party?

While I am a member of the Ontario Liberal Party, my focus as a trustee candidate is entirely on advocating for the educational needs and well-being of students. Everyone may have some affiliation with a political party, but as a trustee, my priority is to make decisions that are in the best interest of students, parents, educators, caregivers, and the community.

I am committed to serving the students, parents, and educators of Don Valley West without political influence, ensuring that decisions are always made based on what is best for our schools and community.

7. Do you have any endorsements?

I am proud to have the support of many community members, parents, and educators who share my commitment to improving our schools and advocating for the well-being of students. Some of the prominent community leaders and business owners in Don Valley West who have endorsed me include:

- **Geoff Kettel**, Leaside Resident, Co-President of the Leaside Property Owners' Association, Co-Chair of the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA), Board Member and Chair of Community Services at Don Valley Community Legal Services
- **George Hurst**, Leaside Resident and former President of the Rotary Club Toronto Leaside
- **Lisa Grogan-Green**, Lawrence Park resident and Co-Chair of the Go Green Youth Centre
- **Asif Mehmood**, Thorncliffe Park resident and Director at the Canadian Community Services Organization
- **Engineer Muhammad Shakir**, Don Valley West resident, Entrepreneur, and Business Owner
- And a few more

These endorsements reflect the broad community support and trust I have earned, and I am grateful for their commitment to making a positive impact in our schools.

Honours and Awards:

- **Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Award** (2023)
- **Outstanding Canadian Award** (2022)
- **Pandemic Hero Award** (2022), from Member of Parliament, Don Valley West
- **Agnes McPhail Award** (2015), from the City of Toronto
- **Toronto Mayor's Community Safety Award** (2012)
- **Best CPLC of the Year Award** (2012), from the Toronto Police Service
- **Crime Prevention Association of Toronto (CPAT) Award** (2012), for reducing crime in Thorncliffe
- **MPP Community Volunteer Services Award** (2011), from MPP Don Valley West
- Recognition for Community Service, including awards and certificates from:
 - Mayor of Toronto
 - Chief of Police
 - Toronto Police Service
 - Crime Prevention Association of Toronto
 - Valley Park Go Green Cricket Field Centre of Excellence
 - Canadian Association of Pakistani Origin