

2024 Trustees Election Questionnaire Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

The Catholic Church considers that elected democratic office is a position of immense responsibility, to be held in high trust and exercised with great humility, wisdom, and responsibility, in the interest of the common good.

This is particularly true with respect to those who seek to govern publicly-funded Catholic Schools. Education is of first importance for the future of our society, and Catholic education, properly conducted, can be of unique importance in passing our faith to future generations. Few endeavors offer comparable opportunities to integrate faith into the entire range of personal and social values for future generations.

The Church teaches that the ultimate purpose of this life is to seek the truth, which is God. “God is the ultimate end of his creatures and for no reason may the common good be deprived of its transcendent dimension.” This truth is most effectively communicated to our children by their families, parishes, and schools.

Please confirm your name and GSCS region, and preferred contact information:

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YOUR VISION FOR SERVICE AS A TRUSTEE

Catholic schools are not alternate public schools. In addition to the curriculum presented by secular schools, Catholic schools provide religious instruction, impart Gospel values and display religious symbols, and serve as a critical part of the Church’s mission to evangelize youth. Catholic and non-Catholic parents freely choose to send their children to Catholic schools with the full expectation that they will be socialized into a faith community in which the person and message of Jesus is central to instruction in all subject areas.

The distinctiveness of Catholic schools arises from their teaching students to incorporate the person and the message of Jesus Christ in all aspects of their lives, while our secular society looks to the individual human being as the measure of all things. Catholic schools provide the spiritual and transcendent dimension which says that God is ultimately the measure and meaning of life.

Q. 1. What draws you to the vocation of service as a Catholic school trustee?

My desire is to serve God and my community by helping to foster school cultures that encourage excellence in learning, strong moral character, spiritual formation in the Catholic tradition, and a sense of responsibility for the common good of all people, particularly the most vulnerable in our society.

Q. 2. What do you hope to accomplish as a Catholic school trustee?

I hope to raise the standard of Catholic education by more intentional focus on the spiritual dimension of our students – that upon graduating from our schools they would be firmly rooted in their relationship with Christ and choose to serve God by active participation in His Church and loving service of their neighbour.

Q. 3. What experience do you have that qualifies you to serve as a Catholic school trustee?

I served on the board of my professional association as it transitioned from a registration to regulatory body, requiring in-depth policy development to align with guiding legislation. Over the past 12 years I have served on numerous parish and school councils deepening my understanding of the operations of these organizations. I have participated in intentional discipleship training which has provided me with the opportunity to journey with individuals and groups as they come to know Jesus in more profound ways.

Q.4. In your view, what are the most important contributions Catholic education can make to the lives of children, and the communities they will become part of?

I believe the most important contribution is opportunities of authentic encounter with Christ. When Christ holds the highest priority in our lives, all other aspects will be appropriately aligned, and find their fulfillment.

Q. 5. Please describe the nature of your devotion to Christ and the Catholic Church, including ways in which you witness to your faith in your daily life.

My faith serves as the foundation of my life. Participation in the Mass, the sacraments, adoration, and commitment to daily prayer ground my life in relationship with Jesus. These practices equip me to lovingly serve my family, my coworkers and clients, and my neighbours with kindness, compassion, and purpose.

Q.6. As a trustee, how do you propose to ensure that the sacramental needs of Catholic students are supported by the Catholic school system?

Building strong relationships between our schools and our parishes is of utmost importance because of the integral role our clergy have in the celebration of the sacraments. Greater effort is needed to ensure these relationships flourish. Engaging and supporting priests to have a significant presence in our schools should be the priority of both the diocese and school division. I would like to see more intentional collaboration between our principals and clergy. Some schools and parishes do this very well and there would be great value in learning together from these positive examples.

Q.7. In addition to ensuring that students are taught the Catholic notion of incorporating faith into all aspects of our lives, trustees are responsible for ensuring that students are encouraged to do their very best in taking in the full range of provincial educational curricula. How do you see yourself assisting in that process?

Pursuing a well-rounded education is an essential goal for our students, and I believe that it will be crucial for us to address the challenges ahead. One significant obstacle we may encounter in the coming years is ensuring we have adequate facility space to provide a comprehensive educational experience for all our students, particularly given our high enrolment numbers.

This challenge will require our board and leadership to explore innovative solutions. I am dedicated to collaborating with our senior leadership team to develop practical strategies that will enable us to maximize our educational offerings while accommodating our growing student body. Together, I am confident we can find effective ways to support offering a full range of curricula, so students have the opportunity to learn and demonstrate their best.

Q.8. In order to ensure that Catholic schools and the communities they teach in remain true to the Catholic faith, it is important that Catholic school boards and individual trustees remain in contact with their local parishes and bishops. What is your plan for remaining in touch?

I believe a trustee should be a living witness to the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Weekly Mass attendance is an opportunity for me to encounter Christ and receive the grace to humbly serve Him. My family is actively involved in our parish community. This is where we build relationships with our fellow parishioners and priests to grow in communion with one another.

Our board also has a long history of collaborative work with the diocese – maintaining this relationship is essential. Our division has two wonderful priests that serve as our bishop’s delegates. This very direct connection between the board and our diocese should be utilized to its full potential.

Q.9. In what ways do you envision yourself advocating for the continuing rights of Catholics to educate their children in publicly-funded Catholic schools?

The Theodore case has reaffirmed the right for Catholic schools to exist. All Catholics have a duty and responsibility to ensure our schools have a distinct identity rooted in Christ and His Church. For me, advocacy takes various forms. As a parent, it is ensuring the classroom content my children receive forms them in a Catholic worldview. As a school community council member, it is ensuring our school initiatives and spending also contribute to the fulfillment of the unique mandate of Catholic schools. As a trustee, I would continue my advocacy efforts to ensure Catholic education upholds its distinct identity so as to remain a desirable option for families in our community.

Q.10. Trustees are responsible to students and parents for ensuring that the fullness of Catholic values, beliefs and teachings are passed on to our children, and for helping to ensure that our children carry those values and teachings into the broader community. How do you propose to ensure that you yourself are aware of the full range of matter you will be expected to impart to students?

As a parent of both elementary and high school-aged children, I have a real understanding of the relevant issues facing our youth and the challenges they have to live as faith-filled believers in today's society. Faith formation holds a central place in our family prompting us to seek out well-designed resources and connect with impactful ministries that nurture young people's spiritual growth. This journey has provided me with valuable insights into what resonates with youth today. My husband and I are fortunate to be part of a community of mentors whose wise counsel and example are a tremendous support. I am also committed to my own ongoing formation through personal reading, small group discipleship, and spiritual retreats – there is always more to learn and understand about our Catholic faith.

Q.11. As elected public officials, trustees are accountable to their constituents for prudent, wise, and equitable use of resources, in an open and accountable fashion. In what specific ways do you propose to discharge that duty?

On a broad scale, it is essential to prioritize financial transparency and accountability in all our financial decisions. This commitment not only fosters trust within our community but also ensures that resources are utilized effectively to support our educational objectives.

On a more localized level, implementing comprehensive financial training for our leaders would be highly beneficial. By equipping our administrators with the necessary skills and knowledge, we can promote efficient and consistent financial practices across all our schools. This proactive approach will help safeguard our financial resources and enhance the overall fiscal health of our division.

Q.12. In closing is there a short comment or favourite biblical quote you would like to share?

The scripture that has been guiding to me through this process is Romans 12:2 – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.”