

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?

In education we are all life long learners, within our faith we should have a life long journey with Christ. I started my first 12 years of education in a catholic school, teaching for 31 years 19 of those years(teacher/principal) in a Catholic school, a 3rd and 4th degree Knights of Columbus, holding positions from Outside Guard to Grand Knight. It is now time to extend my journey as a position of service within a Catholic School Division as a Catholic School Trustee.

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

From my teaching experience, I believe that classroom complexity is the single most important aspect in education. Providing for all the needs of a student's education while maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere is paramount. My priorities would be ensuring students needs are met, keeping Catholic education viable and available. With the increase of GSCS student population of 2500 in two years and no new schools. The necessity of new schools would also be a priority.

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

My faith journey started as an alter server in grade school, and continuing through my adult life as a K of C member, lay Minister, and Catholic School Principal. While a principal I started every assembly with "Praise be Jesus Christ", students and staff would respond "praise him now and forever". This allowed all present to center themselves on the teaching of Christ, and those teachings permeate our home and school life. My experience as a Catholic principal gave me insight to the challenges, to take the necessary steps, so catholic education is positive and enshrined in the students lives.

[you are invited to attach a copy of your resume]

Catholic school trustees are called to express their personal faith in full communion with and participation in the faith life of the Catholic Church.

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?

Making catholic faith-based decisions in a secular society is challenging, but when a student, parent and church community are joined in a catholic educational setting, Christian strength is given to all. Our catholic community/education system must foster a safe faith-based environment permeating the statement "What would Jesus Do". These attributes begin in the classroom and flow out into the greater community.

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.

Saying Grace before a meal in a public restaurant is a simple task but not common. My wife and I have given thanks in this manner often. A life of service within the Catholic church and community at large is shown through, prayer at home, attendance at mass, lay ministers, as well as involvement in service clubs. As a city Councillor, a painting by Greg Olsen, "O Jerusalem", hung above my desk at Old City Hall for 11 years, displaying to all, my commitment and beliefs.

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?

Religious education encompassing sacramental needs and catholic beliefs on a daily basis is crucial in spiritual development. Prayer before school starts, at lunch and before the end of the school day must be a daily devotion. A close relationship with parishes and religious orders, allowing for visitations by Priests and Sisters, masses at school and students attendance at nearby church during school hours. Realizing that parents are primary educators, Catholic schools should supplement and support sacramental preparation.

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?

As a faith-based school in the Catholic tradition, all teachings must be subject to scriptures and catholic Church guidelines. Academic education following the Sask. Curriculum should be taught understanding that these teachings must fall within the Catholic teachings. Any topics contrary to the catholic faith must be opposed vigorously. Using my experience, I would lobby the provincial Government to enshrine catholic rights to a faith-based education.

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?

Open dialogue is a two-way conversation, I will seek out opportunities with the dioceses, Bishop and parish priests for open discussions. When I was a principal, I and all principals within the school parish had regular meetings with the pastor of our church. Attending parish and dioceses events at every opportunity, allowing for the invitation on discussion on further engagement with schools and staff. It would be my hope to establish such regular meetings seeking collaboration and new methods to ensure that catholic faith is first in all school activities.

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?

A Catholic school is NOT any greater of a financial cost then any other school in the province. When the provincial Government funds a school the cost and budget is equal in all schools. From a financial aspect, there is no difference between a catholic school and a public school. They are funded the same, they have the same ratio of staff, the same structural footprint, the same operational, and maintenance budget. Catholic schools have one strong and viable difference, students are able to emulate their faith and study in the light of Christ. I would vigorously defend Catholic education that was given to us in the Constitution.

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?

The Catholic school Board is an advisory and governance board. All trustees must make it their personal goal to be fully educated and aware of influences from the greater community, be willing to discuss and embrace all matter of topics. Trustee must also be aware of their boundaries understanding that outside the school setting parents are the primary educators. Through constant interaction with all stakeholders, awareness of the greatest range of topics in today's Catholic world is gained.

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?

Trustees must be accessible to all stakeholders through public meetings, coffee sessions, visits to school and or staff meetings, public events, communication such as email/phone calls, parish activities, church bulletin and many more avenues not mentioned here as they arise.

VOLUNTARY ADDED RESPONSE 12.

The painting below has been a great part of my life for decades. The message written by Greg Olsen says it all:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings..."

This is a Messianic exclamation of profound concern and unconditional love for all who have lost their way and suffer while wandering in spiritual darkness. As the slanting rays of the sun reflect upon the rooftops of Old Jerusalem, Christ reflects upon His life's mission and upon those He came to serve and bless. His gaze takes in the glistening gold and marble of Herod's Temple and the smoke of burnt offerings upon the altar. He was keenly aware that soon He would offer Himself up as the true Passover Lamb – "the Lamb of God."

Here, upon the Mount of Olives, Jesus could see the day, like His mortal ministry, coming to a close. However, a new day always dawns and there is hope and comfort in His words, "Lo, I am with you always." Just as He looked down upon the traveling pilgrims entering Jerusalem, He watches still from yet a higher vantage point, ready to extend His protective wing to all who seek Him."



[It is a requirement that candidates for the office of Catholic separate school trustee be Catholic. Many voters, including particularly parents of school children, seek assurance that trustees they elect are active, dedicated Catholics. If you have a letter of reference from your pastor, or other documentary assurance, we invite you to attach it. Please note, however, that this is not a requirement for posting of your response.]