

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:

Candidate’s name:

Region (circle one) Saskatoon / Humboldt / Biggar / Martensville-Warman

E-mail:

Phone:

Social Media Handle(s):

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?

I see it as an extension of the responsibility of being a parent. While not exclusive to parents, the assurance of good education for children is of particular importance for those who are blessed with the privilege of raising them. Further than that, though, is the matter of raising children in the Catholic faith. Benedict XVI put it succinctly, “Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.”

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080417_cath-univ-washington.html

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

There are three main issues that I advocate:

- Our Catholic faith as the centre of our school division
- Proper support for students and teachers in the classrooms
- Direct accountability to families

To do this, I would look to updating the governance policies of the GSCS, in particular the Decision Matrix (2.7 of the Policy Manual). Ensuring the governing and administrative teams of the school division are aligned towards providing the best quality Catholic education for our children is critical.

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

In addition to my wife and I raising four children I have served as a trustee for an independent school. I have been on several financial accountability boards. My background in construction project planning and music program directing affords me a broad perspective that would be useful for the school division. I have also worked both as a volunteer and as an employee of St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral, which has allowed me to hear from many Catholic families what their expectations are of the GSCS.

[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?

As mentioned in question 1, Pope Benedict has outlined how important Catholic education is for the formation and living of the Gospel. Formation in the doctrine of the faith is not merely for those within the visible Church, but for everyone. The principles of human rights, the infinite dignity of the person as a result of the creation by God, and the importance of justice for the poor are all examples of the

deposit of faith that our whole society is built on, even beyond the walls of the Church. It is critical to form our children in these values, especially considering the Catholic origins of them.

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.

Prayer is the centre of the Christian faith, and I strive to live that faith and model it for my family. Yet I am a sinner, and so my broken example is not enough. That is why I would point to Christ as our Salvation and his saints as the model of His Love. Praying the offices of Morning Prayer (Lauds), Evening Prayer (Vespers), and Night Prayer (Compline) is important to me. Even more so is actively participating in the Mass as directed by the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*). For more on that from a Music Director's perspective, please see my presentation at PPK on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-C-nFfGACnM&t=3s>

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?

From my experience working with children and families in a parish, young people are hungry for a deep, meaningful sacramental life. I advocate for the school system to reflect on what the Church has asked for in our Sacraments. That means providing confessions, Mass offered in a spiritually edifying manner, a focus on developing spiritual Vocations rather than merely a secular career path.

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?

I will always advocate for a quality education for our students. One that provides them a comprehensive understanding of the Faith and the world. This is the role of the school: to form students for a longing for and grasping of Truth. Like Pope Saint John Paul the Second opens in *Fides et Ratio*, "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth."

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 the bishop and any priest in good standing should be invited to attend any and every meeting of the Board. Each trustee should be well acquainted with the schools in the division and the specific needs, but it can't stop there. A relationship with the parishes which provide so much support for our schools is critical as well.

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?

GSCS, like most Catholic school systems in North America, is no stranger to hostility from an increasingly secular society. The challenges are multi-faceted, and must be met with a positive, open-hearted response that shows the integrity of our faith and capability in education.

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?

Being a Trustee is serious responsibility. I am committed to taking the time to speak with teachers, principals, students, families, parishes, and all stakeholders to both listen to their concerns and to advocate for the centrality of our Faith in the Catholic School system.

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?

First would be to issue an open invitation to all stakeholders to come and attend the meetings as often as they can. I would advocate for the meetings to be held at a time which would make public attendance more convenient. I would also pursue changing the culture of the Board to one that defaults to publishing voting records rather than the current one of keeping them private.

[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.]