

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: Erik Carey

Region: Saskatoon

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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?

I believe that as Catholics we are called to have concern for our society and a desire to improve it. I have always been passionate about public service and believe that serving as a Catholic school trustee is a way in which I can serve God and our Catholic community.

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

As a Catholic school trustee, I aim to foster a Christ-centered education where students can thrive spiritually and academically. I want Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools to engage more openly with parents by holding public meetings at times that work for busy families. Building new Catholic schools to accommodate our growing population is important to me, and I believe these should be stand-alone buildings rather than attached to public schools. I'd also like to see class sizes reduced and complex needs addressed giving students more one-on-one time with their teachers. Ensuring that Mass and the sacraments are readily available in our schools is a priority, too. Finally, I hope to see improvements in math and reading levels to better prepare our students for the future.

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

My educational experience includes degrees in political studies and agribusiness. Professionally, I have worked at the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and in the House of Commons as a legislative assistant, where I gained experience in policy research and advocacy on important national and international issues. Additionally, I've spent over nine years as a reservist in the Canadian Armed Forces, which has further developed my leadership skills. I've also served on various boards in different roles, including chair and treasurer. As a practicing Catholic, I approach public service and education with a perspective shaped by my Catholic faith.

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?

The greatest contribution of Catholic education is its focus on developing the whole person - mind, body, and spirit. In Catholic education, children can grow intellectually, explore their interests, build community, find meaning, and deepen their relationship with God. By developing the whole person, Catholic education prepares students for personal and professional success and equips them to be witnesses of Christ in society, helping to evangelize the world.

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.

I was born and raised in the Catholic Church and attended Catholic schools for most of my life. I was blessed to have received a Catholic education where I learned about the gospel, attended mass regularly and received the sacraments of initiation. At university, I joined Catholic Christian Outreach, where I participated in faith studies, Eucharistic Adoration, and social events. CCO helped me grow closer to Christ and to make Him the center of my life. My faith is very important to me and brings great strength and comfort during trying times. I pray regularly, partake in the sacraments, and try to follow God's commandments.

During university, I attended daily Mass at St. Thomas More College's chapel. These days, I go to Sunday Mass each week, alternating between Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and St. Paul's Co-Cathedral. I am a member of the Knights of Columbus, Council 1517.

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?

As a trustee, I would support the sacramental needs of Catholic students by making Mass and the sacraments more accessible in our schools. This includes organizing regular school Masses and providing opportunities for students to participate in the sacraments like Reconciliation and the Eucharist. I believe it's important to include the Catechism in the curriculum so that students have a solid grounding in their faith. By focusing on the teachings of the Church, we can help instill Catholic moral virtues in our students, helping them to grow as faithful individuals who understand and live out their faith.

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 trustee, I'd encourage and advocate for more integration of faith into the curriculum. I would also advocate for more resources from the provincial government, so that we can provide an excellent educational environment for all students.

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 know many of the priests in town and communicate with my own parish priest regularly. If elected I would regularly seek the counsel of our local priests and Bishop Mark through meetings and regular

correspondence.

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 right to publicly funded Catholic education is enshrined in the constitution of our country and was a precondition for confederation. It is disappointing that many judges and politicians would seek to rewrite the constitution and take away our educational rights. I am a strong advocate for maintaining publicly funded Catholic schools and would oppose any attempt to compromise this important right. I fully support the province's use of the notwithstanding clause to protect our schools from activist courts.

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?

To ensure I'm fully aware of the Catholic values, beliefs, and teachings I need to impart to students, I plan to continue to learn about the faith, the Catholic school system and to partake in any education and training that becomes available. I will also seek the counsel of educators in our system and the priests in our diocese to keep informed about the issues in our community and schools. I'll also make it a priority to be available and to communicate with parents regarding their concerns.

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?

Serving on the board of trustees is a public service funded by the hard-working rate payers of our city. I believe it's important for trustees to be transparent about how money is spent and to be wise and prudent with expenditures. I support making all information on budget decisions and expenditures publicly available so that rate payers are informed about how funds are being spent.

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

"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)"

[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.]

Fr. Stefano Penna and Fr. Daniel Yasinski will attest that I regularly attend St. Paul's Co-cathedral and Our Lady of Lourdes parish.