

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: Christopher, Michelle

Region: Saskatoon @Large

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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 truly believe that God has called me to serve Him in this way. In addition to the stirrings in my own heart, over the past few years I have had several people ask me to consider running for Catholic School Board Trustee. The success of the Catholic School system is of utmost importance to me.

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

I hope to help create an environment where every student is given the opportunity to fall in love with Jesus. Every child deserves to know how deeply they are loved by God because only then can they fully become who God created them to be. I will advocate for greater Catholic formation not just for our students but also for our teachers because I believe it is impossible to model or teach what you don't have yourself.

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

In my professional career I worked as both a private practice lawyer and as a government attorney with Justice Canada. This experience has prepared me well to deal with the many legalities involved in the school system. My time with Justice Canada also helped me to develop the skills needed to effectively communicate in board meetings and within government organizations.

In addition to the experience gained in my professional life, I have also served in many volunteer capacities within the Catholic Church which have helped me to grow as a leader and as a disciple of Christ. I am currently a member of the Leadership Team at my parish and as part of that team, I recently attended a week-long Leadership Immersive with Father John Riccardo and the Acts XXIX team in Detroit, Michigan. I believe that my leadership skills and all the ways I've learned to be a better leader will serve me well if elected as a Catholic School Board Trustee.

[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?

There is nothing more important than helping children fall in love with Jesus. We are created to be in relationship with God and until that happens we will never reach our full potential. Facilitating opportunities for children to develop a personal relationship with Jesus should form the basis of all that we do within the schools. A learning environment based in Catholic values will provide students with the tools they need to not only excel academically but spiritually as well. When that happens, students will naturally grow in their desire to serve the communities in which they live.

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 love for Jesus forms the core of my identity. I was raised Catholic but it wasn't until I fell in love with Jesus (about 10 years ago) that I really understood what it meant to be Catholic and live my life for Christ. This changed everything for me! I now attend mass 3-4 times per week and spend at least 1 1/2 to 2 hours in adoration every week. Daily prayer (which includes the rosary) is extremely important to me and is a non-negotiable part of my life. In addition to volunteering in several capacities over the years (most notably in youth ministry and as a faith study leader), I have been instrumental in creating new opportunities for people to encounter Jesus. I am part of the team that brought Source musical adoration to St. Anne's parish and have started a prayer cenacle as well. I truly believe that, as disciples of Christ, we are all called to do our part to help the people around us encounter Jesus in a personal way.

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?

I think it is important to ensure that each Catholic school has a close relationship with their local church. It is within that relationship that students will be afforded the opportunity to receive the sacraments. Masses should be offered regularly for students and staff as well as bussing to the church if necessary. Confession should also be offered regularly. Students also need to be taught the importance of the sacraments.

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?

When children are taught who they are in Christ, they will naturally strive to be the very best that they can be. Knowing and loving Jesus naturally propels us to strive for excellence so as to make the best use of the gifts God has given us to share with the world. As a trustee, I would work to create a system that values God first and then leads students to embrace the skills and gifts God gave them with which to serve Him. A high quality education is invaluable and I believe every student deserves the help they need to achieve their best. Once a child understands how important they are in God's great design, it is up to the school system to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their full potential.

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 attend mass and diocesan events on a regular basis and am in regular communication with my pastor. I am also comfortable speaking to Bishop Mark if any issues arise that I believe require his input. In the past when I've had concerns with the Catholic School system I have taken those concerns to local priests and diocesan representatives.

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?

As I've mentioned, my Catholic faith is extremely important to me. I will always stand up for the right of Catholics to educate their children in a publicly funded Catholic School.

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 only way to ensure that I am aware of the full range of issues facing our school system is to remain involved in both my church and my community. I will encourage parents to bring their concerns to me so that these concerns can be addressed at the board level.

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?

I am an approachable person and will always be open to discussing any questions constituents may have.

[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.]