



2022 Questionnaire

Ontario Catholic School Trustees

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, district and ward, and preferred contact information:

Candidate's name: *Melissa Fraser-Arnott*

School District: *Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB)*

Ward: *Zone 6 (Wards 8 & 9)*

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YOUR VISION FOR SERVICE AS A TRUSTEE

Adapted from OCSTA's "[Becoming a Catholic School 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 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 makes the human person 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 am running to be a school board trustee because I believe in the power of education to improve the lives of individuals and brighten the future of communities. Schools can do more than provide students with the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed in the workplace, they can help students to learn about their value and potential.

I am also an OCSB parent, with one child currently attending a zone 6 school and another who will join the board in the future. I am invested in their educational experience. A key lesson that I want to instil in my children is the belief that we should give back to our community. I believe that receiving a high-quality education in a supportive, encouraging school community should not be restricted to a privileged few. We have a responsibility to create a positive educational experience for every child. I have volunteered at the school level as a member of the parent council and I see the position of school board trustee as an opportunity to serve the broader Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) community.

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

I want to foster participation and engagement in the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) community. I want all OCSB parents, guardians, students, and community members to feel comfortable reaching out to their school board and to feel certain that they will be listened to and respected. I will seek to ensure that the feedback that I receive from the OCSB community is included in the board decision making process.

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

As a librarian, I am experienced in finding, evaluating, and sharing information. Putting the right information in the right hands at the right time can be life changing. The ability for students to navigate today's complex and sometimes overwhelming information environment is a key competency in our information society. Incorporating good data and evidence into decision making processes is key to good governance. I have educational and practical experience in managing programs and projects.

As a parent of young children, I understand and share the challenges faced by the Ottawa Catholic School Board parent/guardian community. I appreciate how important your child's school experience is to you. I have served as a parent council volunteer and have helped to organize events for the school community. I understand the importance of providing parents/guardians with opportunities to interact with each other to share ideas and experiences.

As a lifelong learner, I have over ten years experience participating in and delivering online education programs at the post-secondary level. I have completed a doctorate (PhD), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) and several certificates and diploma programs both online and in-person. Online education offers tremendous opportunities but also has distinct challenges that will need to be addressed and my experience with this learning environment will be a benefit to the board.

As a manager and a researcher on management-related topics, I have studied the competencies that information professionals need to succeed in today's information economy and have offered guidance to new professionals seeking to build these competencies. I can offer this perspective to the school board as they prepare programs to assist students in succeeding after graduation, whether they are pursuing further studies in colleges or universities or entering the workforce directly.

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 that one of the most important contributions that Catholic education can make in the lives of children is the transmission of values to guide their behaviour toward others as part of a community. The value of service is particularly important in building communities. Children who are taught the value of service understand that they have a responsibility for making their communities better places and that every act of service, including the smallest gestures of kindness, can make a difference in the lives of their neighbours.

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?

For me, there are three key ways in which I witness my faith in my daily life. The first is prayer and reflection, taking a few moments each day to reflect, express gratitude, and to focus on that which is important and meaningful in life. We pray as a family before meals and use prayers that my daughter shared with us from school. The second is acting with kindness and compassion, beginning by believing in the goodness of others and trying to see things from another's perspective. The third is modeling service. Being willing to give my time to help others and my community.

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?

The relationship between Catholic schools and their local parishes and communities provides the connection through which Catholic students' sacramental needs are met. School trustees play a role in maintaining this relationship.

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 all their studies, covering the full range of provincial educational curricula. How do you see yourself assisting in that process?

Achieving academic success and building confidence in their competencies and ability to overcome challenges is an important objective for all students. I will bring my experience as a librarian and a researcher to the process of implementing and reviewing programs designed to support student success. These programs should be based on best practices from research and evidence of effectiveness.

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 will reach out to parish offices within the zone to establish a regular meeting schedule. Regular conversations are needed to establish relationships between Catholic school trustees and local parishes.

Q.9. Some have proposed that separate Catholic schools be abolished. In what ways do you envision yourself advocating for the continuing rights of Catholics to educate their children in separate Catholic public schools?

Promoting the excellent work that is being done in our schools is one of the best ways in which school trustees can advocate for Catholic schools. Catholic teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, administrators, and staff foster intellectual, social, and spiritual growth and their work has a positive impact on their students and communities shows.

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?

We cannot educate others without educating ourselves. I will continuously seek to increase my understanding of the matters that can impact Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) students by seeking opportunities to educate myself, including meeting with stakeholders, reading scholarly and practitioner literature, and participating in workshops and other training opportunities.

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?

As much as we would like to provide children in our community with every possible resource to enhance their school experience, we know that this simply isn't possible. School trustees have a responsibility for ensuring that schools make the best possible use of their resources. A key aspect of this responsibility is basing decisions on the best possible evidence. This includes the use of research as well as implementation data. We need to know that the programs that we are supporting in our schools are achieving their stated objectives.

Q.12. It is a [statutory requirement that candidates](#) for the office of Catholic public school trustee be Catholic. Please attach a copy of a letter of reference from your pastor confirming your Catholicity, or other evidence, if available.

I am Catholic. I was baptized at Saint Martin de Porres Parish, celebrated the sacraments of reconciliation, first communion, and confirmation at Divine Infant Parish, and completed my marriage preparation as well as had my children baptized at St. John the Apostle parish in Ottawa. I was married at St. Anthony Daniel parish in Kitchener. I have celebrated mass in several churches in Ottawa including Divine Infant, St. John the Apostle, and Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

Pressing SUBMIT will cause a copy of this document to be returned to Catholic Conscience, for posting on our website for use by voters in choosing trustees. Should you wish later to revise or withdraw your responses, please contact us at info@CatholicConscience.org.

Thank you for helping to improve our electoral process and our schools!