

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: Marguerite Gravelle

School District: OCSB

Ward: Orleans, Zone 3

E-mail: margueritegravelle1@gmail.com

Phone:

Social Media Handle(s): www.facebook.com/mg4trustee

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 feel that parents have limited opportunities to connect with trustees and school administrators meaningfully. I would like to see increased opportunities for parents and students to influence decisions or provide input into fostering a collaborative relationship between schools and families. I feel that interactions between parents/guardians and the OCSB is often a result of a negative experience. I would to change that and be proactive by understanding the needs of the community. Each community in Orleans has different needs so providing opportunities to provide constructive feedback and suggestions should be offered in an informal and casual way to promote collaboration. My main motivation comes from a negative experience during the pandemic and I want to make a change in the current trustee/OCSB/parental/guardian landscape. As a trustee, I would commit to being an active and present partner between parents/guardians and the OCSB to encourage increased positive communications to support the relationships between schools, homes and the Catholic church..

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

I would like to foster better collaboration between the Provincial Government, the schools, parents/guardians and the church. The pandemic really shone a light on many gaps within the communication avenues as well as the lack of opportunities to seek input from parents. Many decisions made during the pandemic were head scratching and there was no opportunity to discuss or change course. I am not affiliated with any political party and believe a school board trustee should remain impartial. Politics has played too much of a role in the past few years within the Catholic School system and I would like to see the direction change.

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

I hold a Master's degree in Business Analysis which has enabled me to understand not only the business/budget aspects of a trustee, but also the critical thinking skills that would enable me to challenge questionable decisions from the Province. I am also a parent to 1 biological child and 2 bonus children which are in the Catholic school system. The pandemic posture exposed many gaps between the OCSB and the parental support that is offered outside of school hours. As a parent with a struggling child, I was desperate for direction from the school and the board. It was an unprecedented time and I believe the board has a large opportunity now to address gaps identified during the pandemic to bring more resources into the home. I have no political experience, but despite this position being elected, I feel it's a role that requires someone who cares about kids and their education. I am a person who is committed to transparency and honesty and the balance will be an adjustment, but I'm passionate about this role and will make every effort to ensure I offer the best service to the community of the OCSB.

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?

Catholic education develops stronger faith in children which they can bring to their lives outside of the school. Many parents and guardians are very busy in their day to day lives, and Sunday services are not always attended. The Catholic school system is important to ensure that is brought into their lives. The development of a sense of community amongst Catholics is vital to a sense of belonging and feeling support if and when needed.

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 family's faith is witnessed through discussion and reflection in our daily lives. We often have philosophical discussions around faith and religion in which we take pause to reflect. We individually have different ways of showing our devotion to the faith and together we feel a sense of strength and community with our peers.

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 would need to research the current ways in which sacrament is available in schools and if any of the needs are not being met. I would attempt to become a liaison with local churches in my ward to build additional bridges with the schools.

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?

I see myself advocating for additional resources to ensure that ALL students have the support tools needed to be successful in the full range of their studies. I believe that a lot of schools are underfunded in this space. Incorporating faith into all aspects is a wonderful way to trust the universe that all will be ok, however as a trustee I want to ensure any barriers and biases are removed as much as possible to enable students, parents/guardians, and teachers to have the tools they need to experience success.

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?

Inviting local parishes and church communities to participate in school activities, as well as developing pathways to gaining volunteer hours within local parishes is an excellent way to remain in contact.

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?

Some have proposed that Catholic schools not be abolished, but receive less funding or move towards privatization. There is a high degree of value in the publicly-funded Catholic education system. There is also a place for private education however, it is limited to those who can afford it, or for diplomatic status students. I would defend the publicly-funded system by providing an analysis of the benefits and success stories through the years. It's not a simple comparison between private and public. Analysis and proof through facts would be a considerable asset in its defense. We can also look at the US system as well as the UK system for hints on what privatizing or adding fee-paying schools looks like. I would advocate for the Catholic school system to remain in place as faith-based schooling still holds much value in our society. Many families rely on the Catholic system to bring faith into their children's lives as their local parish, or attending church services is not always possible.

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?

I would need to educate myself further as to the full range of matters that I am expected to impart. If elected, 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 through literature and meeting with Church elders for guidance.

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?

In my day job, I am also responsible for a multi-million dollar budget which is comprised of public funds. I am very sensitive to responsible expenditures and the optics of spending public funds. Budgets are very complicated within the public sector in which I am experienced in reading reports and making educated decisions. I also understand the influence of outside factors when it comes to budget setting and I would be careful to discuss openly any issues/decisions that I feel are influenced by politics and not rooted in the best interests of the education of our children and teachers.

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 was baptized in a Catholic church in Quebec. I did my first communion and confirmation at the Divine Infant Catholic Church in Orleans.

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.

SUBMIT

Thank you for helping to improve

our electoral process and our schools!