

## 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: Jo-Ann Davis

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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?**

The witness provided by my parent’s lives, my own experience as a TCDSB student (St Vincent de Paul and St Joseph College), and my Catholic faith, drive my call to serve. Seeking to represent, and advocate for, all students, families and schools in the role of Catholic trustee brings together our collective call to serve with a personal desire to protect and strengthen our publicly-funded Catholic schools.

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

1. Work with senior staff and trustees to reduce the clear inequity which exists in student learning opportunities and outcomes across our Board. This includes things like, student access to technology and other classroom learning tools, experiential opportunities, programming and available course options; the decades long gap in reading and writing achievement for boys; the lack of consistent learning supports for, and inclusion of, students with special learning needs and systemic barriers for Indigenous, Black and other racialized students.
2. Bring measurement and metrics to what we’ve stated are critical board-wide goals - whether those are in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Equity Action Plan, Board Learning Plan or the Special Education Framework. Activity doesn't equal progress, and while there is clearly a lot of activity taking place and no doubt much of it good, if we aren't monitoring and reporting on, the same manageable list of school-based metrics across the board, we can't demonstrate meaningful progress in our schools towards those stated goals, prioritize needed local action – because it won't be the same for every school - or effectively make the case to the Ministry on behalf of our students, when it's needed.
3. Making our ‘Catholic graduate expectations’ an intentional outcome for every student in terms of our stated approach as a Catholic system - from regular opportunities for student leadership, independent learning and communications development, to varied and meaningful opportunities for faith enrichment and development, to student mentorship programs and civic engagement in the Common Good.

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

I served as TCDSB Ward 9 trustee (2010 – 2018) and both Chair and Vice Chair of the Board. Since then, our family has called Roncesvalles home and I’ve served as CSPC (parent council) Chair of St Vincent de Paul school for the last 4 years.

Further, for the last 20 years I've been a Management Consultant with a focus on leading major strategic change initiatives and governance for corporate clients. Finally, I have served on many NGO boards, including currently serving on the Young People's Theatre, Space Place Canada and Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy boards.

*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 objective of Catholic education - the development of the whole child – mind, body and spirit is clear given both the TCDBS Mission to “be an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity” and its Vision to “transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.” That witnessing of faith comes, in part, from our students, and Catholic education contributes to our students being able to make real our stated [Catholic graduate expectations](#) which is both about the student and the way in which the student engages those in their community and 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 try to live the words attributed to St Francis of Assisi, to “preach the Gospel at all times. Use words as necessary” through my daily decisions and treatment of all those who come into my life, taking up the call to serve as a life-long volunteer, raising our child in the Catholic faith, and in my role as a caregiver for my father. I nurture my faith through regular attendance at St Joan of Arc church, prayer, reading and faith retreats, when possible.

**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 decision was made by the Archdiocese to move sacramental preparation from our Catholic schools to our parishes; but, the school-family-parish partnership is foundational to Catholic education and should be made real both in the resources and opportunities provide by the Board for students and staff, and the local school-parish relationship, including regular opportunities to take part in the sacraments as a school community.

**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?**

For a student to be able to ‘do their best in their studies’ means, fundamentally, providing each student with [equity of opportunity](#) for success and [well-being of mind, body and spirit](#). In addition, there are many things we need to do as a board including supporting [students with special needs](#), [dismantling systemic racism](#), providing [equitable access to technology tools](#), [recognizing the importance of play](#) in supporting better concentration and behaviour in the classroom, and ensuring that we’re [measuring what matters](#) when it comes to student learning.

This are all things which the board of trustees should be asking about, and seeking reports and recommendations for action from staff.

**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?**

As trustee of TCDSB Ward 9 (2010 – 2018) I held an annual leadership meeting to which all pastors, principals, parent council Chairs (CSPC) and the local school superintendents, were invited. The evening began with Mass and the meeting agenda was developed in consultation with all invitees, and provided an opportunity for all those in attendance to listen and learn from each other. Should I be elected trustee of Ward 4 I hope to continue this practice as one way to make real the school-family-parish partnership.

**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?**

Given the thousands of non-Catholic families that choose our Catholic secondary schools, it's clear that we provide our students with an education that is worth preserving. I would encourage locally-elected officials to visit our schools and speak with staff and students to gain a better understanding of the great things going on in our Catholic schools. I would keep the local community informed of coming critical board votes and how the decisions of the board and Ministry impact local students and schools, and encourage them to be vocal in their support and needs of our schools with their locally-elected representatives and the Minister of Education. The advocacy of the community is critical.

**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 will continue to be actively involved in my own parish, take part in faith retreats, and read a wide range of Catholic materials from the latest papal encyclical to taking advantage of the local resources at Pauline Books & Media run by the Daughters of St Paul.

**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?**

Thankfully, during my term as trustee for Ward 9 (2010 – 2018), the board began publishing the expenses of trustees. In addition, I provided expense updates (which were always small and limited to fundamental expenses like my trustee phone) in my regular newsletter and would do so again, should I be elected trustee for Ward 4.

**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 Confirmed at St Joan of Arc church while a student at St Vincent de Paul school (like my son after me) and have been a parishioner at St Joan of Arc church since our family moved to Roncesvalles five years ago.

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](mailto:info@CatholicConscience.org).

**SUBMIT**

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