

## 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: Michael Di Giacomo*

*School District: Hamilton Wentworth DCSB*

*Ward: Ward 7*

*E-mail: [michaeldigiacomo5@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldigiacomo5@gmail.com)*

*Phone:*

*Social Media Handle(s):*

### **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'm drawn to being a Catholic school trustee as I attended a publicly funded Catholic high school (St. Jean de Brebeuf CSS) for four years and frankly, I had a less than desirable and generally very limiting experience in which the accountability of administrators, board members and teachers was extremely lacking to say the very least. As well, I was drawn to running as a Catholic school board trustee to make the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic School board a more accountable, accepting, equitable, less classicist and hypocritical institution that puts the interests of highly paid teachers and demonstrators above those of its students.

As a strong believer in the concept of the Jeffersonian wall between church and state, I decided to run for Catholic school board trustee to attempt to modernize the HWCDSB and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by working towards secularizing it and to remove the dated, draconian, ultramontane attitudes against abortion rights despite most of my Catholic high school teachers never attending mass on anything resembling a regular basis. I know that many others who went through the HWCDSB agree with me on these principles.

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

As Catholic school trustee I hope to secularize (or at least move in the direction of a greater separation of education of religion) the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic School Board and bring it in line with the standard ethics and values of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I would put a very strong emphasis on ensuring that the full extent of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including abortion rights and gays rights. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is completely unreasonable that

As well, I would also like to accomplish the removal of the requirement that individuals wishing to become teachers in the HWCDSB provide a letter of reference from a priest to confirm their faith. I think religion is a personal matter that in no way should impact one's basic eligibility to work for a public. Moreover, I seriously doubt many of my high school teachers attended mass on a regular basis.

I would also like to remove required mass attendance from the HWCDSB for similar reasons.

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

I have an MA and (Honours) BA in Political Science from McMaster university where I focused on Canadian politics and public policy. I have also lived in Ward 7 for over twenty years of my life. Also, unlike the incumbent Pat Daly, I didn't just replace my daddy as an acclaimed candidate in 1985.

[we invite you 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?**

The most important contributions Catholic education are the same of secular, public education, to provide students with a strong, meaningful education and to be a constructive community partner unlike the current state of the HCDSB which takes an extremely insular approach to the broader community of Ward 7 and the City of Hamilton as a whole.

**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.**

The Tests Act that required those wishing to matriculate from institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge University is no longer in effect and as I don't believe it

**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 ideally work towards removing the inclusion of sacraments as a part of any in class element within the HWCDSB. On a side note, the board has already messed up confirmation by bundling grade 7 and 8 classes together for the sacrament instead of sticking to the classic tradition.

**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 strongly disagree, it is not the duty or role of a publicly funded school board such as the HWCDSB to ensure students are taught Catholic notions of anything. It is their responsibility to provide students with a solid, secular education. I would go so far to argue that full funding for Catholic schools under Premier Bill Davis was a regrettable policy misstep. As it instead of moving to eliminate Catholic schools as Quebec and Newfoundland did (or secularize them) it continued the dated of pretending to that Catholics need (or even really want) a separate school system. Public money going towards a religiously themed public institution that has failed to keep up with modern attitudes even in the 1990s and is now reduced to the occasional out to lunch teacher complaining that women have the right to bodily autonomy is not respectable or a worthwhile pursuit.

**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 don't. In fact, I would work towards reducing the link between the private religious institution that is the Roman Catholic Church and the Public institution of the Catholic school board. For a public institution to be so involved with a religious institution is completely inappropriate.

**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?**

I would propose a shift towards the HWCDSB becoming either a second, entirely secular school board that provides parents and students with a second option as to where to educate their children as I believe it is preferable to not force people to attend a school if said school fails to meet their educational needs. Alternatively, I would propose to run the HWCDSB a school board that provides the option for students to participate in Catholic religious activities solely on a voluntarily basis and for Catholicism to play no part in. It is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a publicly funded instruction should in no way be using public money to engage in these sorts of requirements.

In fact, I would actively work towards removing religion classes and instruction as part of the required curriculum for students at all levels and ban any school or teacher from participating in the abhorrent March for Life anti-abortion rallies on school time.

**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 disagree with the premise that school board trustees are responsible for promoting Catholicism and catholic values to students. Public funds should not be used to promote any religion, much less in the context of mandatory publicly funded and run schooling.

**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 would work towards reducing the classicism amongst teachers in the school board. For far too long, I've seen too many teachers and guidance counselors discourage students from pursuing a university education when they are unable to succeed in class, often in large part to the incompetence of their teachers and/or a insufficient support network at home to thrive in school and are unduly pressured

taking college prep level courses.

**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.**

[attach letter of reference]

I respectfully decline to provide one. It's not required to run nor it is any of your business.

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!

## **Michael Di Giacomo**

Hamilton, ON

MichaelDiGiacomo5@gmail.com

### **Willing to Relocate for Work**

### **Highlight of Qualifications**

- Refined verbal and written communication skills through work and education experience
- 3 Years of proven experience developing relationships with customers and students
- Extensive experience analyzing large amounts of information quickly and effectively
- Strong organizational skills through over 4 years of work and academic experience

### **Education**

**Master of Arts Political Science** Sept. 2018-Aug. 2019  
McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

**(Honours) Bachelor of Arts, Political Science** Sept. 2013-Apr. 2018  
McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

### **Employment Experience**

**Validation Officer** May 2022-Present  
Ontario Dealer Finance Centre, Hamilton, ON

- Contact dealers by phone regarding incorrectly submitted funding packages and provide instructions on how to correctly submit the relevant documentation
- Conduct Anti-money laundering checks on down payments on automotive loans based on credit score, monthly income, and rent/mortgage payment
- Analyze large amounts of documentation and identify relevant information and discrepancies within a very short amount of time for up to sixty loans per day
- Research custom dealer finance programs and ScotiaPlan automotive loans

**Seasonal Customer Service Representative** Nov. 2021-December 2021  
LCBO, Hamilton, ON

- Informed customers about the different types of products sold at the LCBO and provide recommendations according to customer input
- Adhered to Ontario legislation and store policy on impaired and underaged customers
- Maintained knowledge of hundreds of current LCBO products including several types of wines, whiskies, and liqueurs

**Document Storage Analyst (Temp)** Aug. 2021-Sept. 2021  
TD Bank, Hamilton, ON

- Sorted, prepared, and digitized over 100 small business banking files per day
- Provided daily and weekly updates to the management teams via email, phone, and Microsoft Teams
- Managed 6,600 small business files in the branch and ensured they were secured in their designated location
- Adhered to TD Bank privacy policies and employee conduct rules

**Teaching Assistant**

Sept. 2018–Apr. 2019

Department of Political Science, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

- Led tutorial discussions with up to 25 students and strengthened students' understanding of course content
- Evaluated student's assignment and provided constructive feedback
- Replied to students' questions and emails in person and over email

**Cashier**

Aug. 2016–Oct. 2018

Food Basics, Hamilton, ON

- Responded to customer's questions and concerns in a busy retail environment
- Operated POS system issuing receipts, change outstanding and refunds to customers
- Trained new employees to operate POS system and sell lottery tickets

**Skills**

Microsoft Office: Word, Teams, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Acrobat

Zoom

Intralink, ALS COM

**Other Experience**

**MA Graduate Student Representative**

Sept. 2018–Aug. 2019

Graduate Committee, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

- Consulted with fellow graduate students on concerns and issues regarding the graduate degree programs within the political science department