

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: Elizabeth Crowe

School District: York Catholic DSB

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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 have been a Catholic Trustee since 1984. My decision to stand for re-election was made after much reflection and prayer. When I started to visit schools again in the spring, the joy was palpable. Witnessing the gift of publicly funded Catholic education, that we are so blessed to have in Ontario, was inspirational. One of my schools had its first in person whole school Mass last June, and the students sang louder than ever before and enthusiastically responded to Fr. John when he prompted: "God is good ... all the time! All the time ... God is good!". This is what Catholic schools are all about: student achievement and spiritual growth founded in the knowledge that we are wonderfully made in the image of God.

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

_If re-elected my commitment to the parents and students of the York Catholic DSB is to provide safe, inclusive schools where students grow in their faith and develop their God-given talents. As a Catholic, I see being a trustee as my vocation in life, to serve my Catholic community by building a strong Catholic school system, that graduates students who are called to serve The Lord and one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

_As we all pray that the recent return to a form of normalcy will be permanent, the trustees of the York Catholic DSB have passed a budget that invests in programs to help students bridge learning gaps along with many mental health initiatives and a continued focus on health and safety, including increased cleaning and ventilation standards. My pledge is to continue these initiatives as best practices even after we have fully emerged from this pandemic.

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

_I have been a Catholic trustee for 28 years and Chair of the YCDSB for 19 of those 28 years.

[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?

_Please see my comments in Question 1. I would also like to add that most of our children do not attend Church regularly, if at all. For many families we are the only contact they have with the Church (outside of Sacramental years) through our school Masses and the pastoral visits of the local priest. As Catholics we believe that parents are their children’s first educators, especially when it comes to faith development. In reality it is up to our schools in partnership with our parishes to ensure that our students understand our rich Catholic Faith traditions and embrace and live our Catholic Values in their daily lives. If we are successful with our evangelization, our graduates, even the non-Catholics in our high schools, will live our Catholic Values and treat everyone as uniquely formed in the image of God.

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 am a member of St. Patrick Parish in Schomberg. My duties as a trustee and Chair of the Board limit my ability, at this time, to participate in Parish life beyond Mass and some social events. I look forward to our parish pilgrimage to Israel in March of 2023 (3 years postponed due to Covid) . Prayer is an integral part of my daily life.

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?

_Sacramental preparation is directed by the local parish and varies from parish to parish. Masses occur regularly in our schools based on the availability of the parish priest.

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?

Our Board is currently working on a new multi-year strategic plan which will be developed with consultation with all our stakeholders including parents, students and parishes. It will drive system priorities and investments as well as the budget process. In addition to our focus on Catholicity in our

schools, it will include supports for student achievement, special education, equitable opportunities for all, technological investments to support learning, mental health, and pupil accommodations plans. The Education Act mandates that Boards consult and approve the plan and then oversee its progress with measurable goals.

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?

My area includes my parish, St. Mary's in Nobleton, Sacred Heart in King City, Our Lady of Grace in Aurora and St. Mark in Stouffville. I stay connected by reading parish bulletins and attending parish events. As trustees we also host a ZONE meeting once a year. We have also regularly met with our Bishop and hope to continue to do so.

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?

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA) is the primary vehicle that we use to advocate for publicly funded Catholic schools. I served 9 years on their Board. As trustees we also need to meet with local MPPs and invite them into our schools so that they understand the value we bring to the social fabric of Ontario.

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 am a strong proponent of trustee faith development. I am committed to working with our Director of Education to ensure that we are always consulting with our Bishop and the Archdiocese when it comes to matters of our faith and the teachings of our Church.

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 a trustee with 28 years of experience I am well versed in the educational funding mechanisms and our budgeting process. Our process has to continue to be transparent with opportunities for stakeholder input. It needs to be driven by our strategic plan so that resources are allocated in areas of highest need and priority.

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] Parish priests have been directed not to endorse candidates and not to get involved in elections., I will not be submitting a letter because I do not want to put Fr. Ignacio in a n awkward position.

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!