

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: Kevin Morrison

School District: Toronto Catholic District School Board

Ward: 9

E-mail: morrisonkevin@hotmail.com

Phone: 416-856-9807

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 have been actively involved in Catholic education for 14 years as a parent and as an advocate for other parents, Catholic voters and our community. I have helped many people in my role as chair of three school councils and feel obligated to continue my work to support our Catholic community and school system.

Being a trustee is a complicated job. To be effective a trustee must understand the school system and be able to help others with compassion and decency.

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

I have worked hard over the past 14 years to establish socio-economic equity among schools mostly through parental involvement and better student achievement. I have been a strong voice for Catholic families and have also worked with the board to address grass roots issues that are often overlooked and ignored. When elected I plan to do the same as a trustee.

The biggest and most pressing issue among our schools, staff and students at present is the learning loss and mental health impact created by the pandemic. The province has made money available to tackle these issues. As a trustee I plan to work to make sure that these funds are used to help students get back on track.

More specifically in Ward 9 I would like to see the planned elementary school for the Regent Park area build as soon as possible. There are also a backlog of school repairs and upgrades on existing schools that need to be expedited.

Equally important, I will also work to make sure that student achievement is at the forefront of all that I do.

I will also work to examine the possibility of a new high school for male students – at present there is no Catholic high school for male students in the ward and we often lose these students to the public board. I feel this is a great disservice to male Catholic students in ward 9. No Catholic student should feel that they have to go to a public school.

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

14 Years Experience

What sets me apart from the other candidates is that I have 14 years of experience as an advocate for students, parents, and Catholic school supporters. Since 2008, I have been the chair of the parent council at all three of the schools that my daughters have attended. I am currently the chair of the downtown Catholic high school that my daughter attends.

In addition to my work on school councils, I was also spent five years as part of the executive leadership team on the Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC) – a statutory committee of the TCDSB that promotes parent involvement and student achievement.

Over my 14 years on school councils and CPIC, I have become extremely knowledgeable about how the TCDSB works. I have worked with parents, students, Catholic voters and board staff to build our Catholic community and make our school system among the best in Canada.

When it comes to the issues facing the students, parents and staff there is no other candidate with my level of experience.

Professional skills and experience that I bring to the TCDSB

I am independent communications consultant with 25 years experience. I have built my own business over the past 18 years and that has allowed me to mostly work from home and play a bigger role in my children's lives.

My client work over the past decade has largely been involved in employment law, labour relations and recruitment. I currently work for the most reputable employment law firm in Canada and the largest recruitment company in the world. My extensive knowledge of labour and employment issues will play an important role as trustee at a school board that spends more than 90% of its annual budget on teacher salaries. Understanding employment, recruitment and labour relations is an extremely important skill set for a trustee.

I bring my Catholic values of social justice and equity into my professional life and live the same values every day in my personal life.

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 Catholic school system in Ontario is older than confederation. The contributions of Catholic education, our students and community are woven into the fabric of our society and our identity as Ontarians and Canadians. The contributions made by the Catholic community and our education system have made Ontario one of the best places to live, work and raise a family.

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 lifelong practising Catholic. My faith is both a personal thing and something that I share with my family and community. I live my Catholic values everyday.

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?

There has been a disturbing trend over the past decade that has seen the preparation for the sacraments in elementary schools increasingly treated as an extra curricular activity. Teachers and principles generally do not support this shift but are put under pressure to deliver the secular curriculum and academic results. I feel a balance can be struck to achieve sacramental needs and educational needs. However, someone must fight for that balance. I pray that I will be given the opportunity to do so that as a trustee.

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?

There is a lot to be discussed about student achievement. It is far too important and detailed to try and squeeze into this questionnaire. I invite people to chat with me, call me or email me to discuss student achievement in greater detail.

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?

There is a lot of work to be done post pandemic to reconnect our parishes with our schools and the broader Catholic community. After two years of the pandemic the relationships between community, parish and schools have reached an all time low.

Currently I am chair of the parent council at a Catholic high school downtown. As a council we are working to find ways to return to normal and rebuild relationships that were put on hold for the past two years. There is a lot of work to be done and it requires support and acknowledgment from the entire Catholic community

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?

More often than not, the secular argument for abolishing Catholic education is poorly informed and generally doesn't account for the political reality in Ontario. Increasingly the campaign to abolish Catholic education is relying on disinformation and the politics of division to garner momentum.

As a communications professional I am not overly concerned that the abolitionist movement can really do much damage. However, a robust investment in a public awareness campaign to encourage Catholics to make sure their school support is directed appropriately is needed.

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?

Trustees aren't really called upon to teach Catholic values directly to students. However, Trustees are expected to protect Catholic values and create policy to ensure that our values are taught in our schools.

As indicated earlier I have concerns that preparation for the sacraments in schools is being set aside. I will work to change and secure proper religious instruction in all TCDSB schools.

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?

Some trustees tend to get elected and disappear when it comes to helping constituents. Then they reappear close to election time. Others use the position as a stepping-stone to higher political office. I am not that candidate. I have worked with parents, teachers and principals for 14 years to solve problems, find better ways to do things and enhance the Catholic experience within the TCDSB.

You couldn't pay me enough to run for city council. I already have a good job that I enjoy. My work within education is purely vocational.

I was among a small group of parents and Catholic rate payers that worked to expose the expense scandal that plagued the TCDSB back in 2009. As a trustee my expenses will be minimal and made public as per the existing policy.

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 did not have enough time to acquire this. But will find my baptismal certificate.

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