

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: Ilona Zankovica-Rivera

School District: Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District

Ward: 6-10

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Social Media Handle(s): Elect Ilona for SMCDSB Trustee

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100084041935006>

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 was born in a Roman Catholic family and since the early childhood I was able to experience the importance of faith and power of prayer. Now, when I am a mother myself, I want my children and other children in the community to grow with the same blessings and appreciate values rooted in Christ's word.

In the past I have been involved in multiple committees/councils, but this time I felt the calling to step up and support our catholic education and strengthen the relationship between parents and school board on a whole different level. I would be honored to represent communities in Wards 6-10 in this important role.

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

I am a doer by nature therefore I will prioritize community's needs, set up achievable plans, create a transparent communication channel and be accessible to all parents/community members. I also want to focus on strengthening catholic education, highlight Catholic values, fight for funding increase to help all children to receive education they need and fully deserve.

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

I am passionate advocate for children's well-being; I uphold strong biblical values; I am bold and not afraid to ask questions. I value transparency and accountability. I have a drive and energy to work hard and voice parents' concerns to the school board, as well as hear the constraints that the school board is dealing with. Finally, I am good negotiator and communicator which makes me an excellent candidate for this important role.

You may also attach 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?

First, children that have God in their hearts feel empathy and compassion towards each other. This creates kind adults, the ones that are loved and are capable to project love towards their brothers and sisters. Second, a faithful mind is a mind that is mentally strong. I believe that faith and obedience to God is giving us peace that is critical in this disturbed day. When we look around we see a lot of confused, scared, stressed and anxious people, but that is the opposite of what God intended for us. When we turn to Bible and cancel all the noise around - we can regain that peace and happiness. That, along with a strong educational pillar, is what Catholic education can achieve, and that is what I want to promote.

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.

Besides attending church, I tend to spend more time reading Bible and applying it's teachings in every day life. As a mom of young kids I understand that we can only lead by example which is a strong motivation for me and my husband. I am blessed to witness that our children are curious about God, and willing to establish their own relationship with Jesus, relate to his teachings and wisdoms. We pray together every night and encourage each other to do better and better. When we meet people who are in distress - we also pray with them and for them. I believe that every small deed can grow in a fruitful tree.

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 is a set of processes, traditions and rituals that identifies the uniqueness of our religion. If someone wants to remove it or part of it - I would be very cautious. I think we need to stand for what we believe and cherish. From the taxpayers' and parents' perspective it would be unfair to modify system that is supported by millions. I truly believe those parents that wish their children to attend catholic schools wish them to be introduced to all sacramental development stages. School boards and Trustees are there to protect this right.

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?

First, we need to clarify that as the keepers and promoters of catholic system, Trustees should have a saying in the aspects of morality in provincial educational curricula. I believe that politics (and political ideologies) should be left outside the school doors. This will allow children to focus on the subjects and catholic values that were intended to be the basis of our educational system.

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 fully agree that in order to deliver a consistent teaching on the word of God we all need to be engaged with the Church life. A truly cohesive environment for the children to learn about God and strength of faith starts in the family, community, school and ends with each individual. I encourage everyone to take an active part in religious life and lead by example. It starts with attending a church weekly, learning Bible, taking additional courses and helping in the 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?

There are so many benefits that a catholic education brings to children. If we acknowledge the importance of physical, mental, social and spiritual strength then we acknowledge a need for Catholic public schools. I am happy to fight (by attending meetings/delivering presentations/reports) for the right to fund catholic educational system and expand the system to flourish and provide more and more programs supporting the needs of our children.

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?

As I have been advocating it all starts with a transparent communication. When we have a direct accessible line of communication we can understand what issues parents and the community is facing. In terms of my maturity and readiness to support our children - I have no doubt that it's the right time for me. Not only I uphold our biblical values, I also make sure that my own children are spiritually educated and taught about the power of God, our Creator. I am open to community and value their feedback. I can assure that every comment will be heard.

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 opinion there is a well-developed and overseen procedure on how to report on this. I anticipate to follow the established reporting requirements and procedures.



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.

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.

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