

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: **Christine Harrop**
School District: **Brant Haldimand Norfolk**
Ward: **Norfolk rep**
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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 value Catholic education and my faith is important to me. I want to ensure our schools remain dedicated to our Catholic values and are a reflection of our faith.

I believe that Catholic school trustees need to be rolemodels in their practise of the Catholic faith and by their words and deeds. The partnership of home, school and church needs to be stronger. Catholic students can recognize the importance of God in their lives and draw closer to God through church attendance, participation in the Mass, prayer and receiving of the sacraments.

I embrace the board's motto of "Excellence in Learning – Living in Christ." I strive to do God's work. I value partnerships of home, school, church and community to foster student and faith development.

I am eager to aspire to positive learning environments that provides faith development and dignity.

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

-To be open and available to all stakeholders.

-To represent the constituents of Norfolk county separate school tax payers and ensure their perspective is represented at the board level.

-To work collaborately with fellow board trustees and ensure that through our decision making process we are guided by our focus in Living with Christ by our works and deeds.

-To ensure that the board's focus of quality learning is acheived through building communities of faith and attaining to safe and caring schools. This must be obtained through partnerships with home, school, church and community and include all stakeholders.

-To be truly living in Christ, to recognize Christ in our brothers and sisters and to serve others our schools must be a witness to this faith. A faith that is lived out daily in words and deeds. Catholic schools need to be welcoming, loving, nurturing, diverse and offer safe, positive faith based environments. Students need to feel included, free from discrimination, segregation and bullying. Accountability and transparency requires safe school plans, that are centred in Christ, updated regularly, communicated to all stakeholders and implemented with regular review and regular inspections. Safety inspection reports must be accessible to all stakeholders.

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

I am an active practising Catholic as an member of the Catholic Family of Parishes in Norfolk, and a life-long member of St. Mary's Church in Simcoe. Currently secretary for St. Mary's Cemetery Committee.

Post-secondary education includes BASc. University of Guelph; Social Work Certificate, University of Waterloo; and Career Development Practitioner Certificate, Ontario College Graduate Certificate, Conestoga College.

I have 25 years of experience working in Adult Developmental Services striving to advocate for individuals experiencing injustices and/or lack of services. I will be a strong voice and an advocate for Catholic education.

I have board experience and community liasion experience at the non-profit level. I worked at the local community college in various roles including instructing. I have a wide range of community work experience including Children's Aid, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Employment Support Program and life skills and employment counselling with youth. I have worked collaborately with schools at the elementary and secondary level through supervising college students on placements. In my last position with Developmental Services Ontario I facilitated meetings with students, their families, school and community support systems in order to assist individuals with the application process to apply for ministry funded services.

My own children attended Catholic schools at both the elementary and secondary levels. I sat on parent school councils at both these levels. I am an active community member and will fight for just solutions to issues.

Past community involvement including youth sports and a wide range of church volunteer activities.

You may also attach your resume.

Attach 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?

Catholic education assists students in their own faith development. In partnership with local parishes and priests students are educated on the sacraments and how to grow in their relationship with God. Catholic students are taught the importance of being Christ-centred in their actions and the importance of moral law.

In today's world our students need hope, love and peace. Jesus offers this to everyone who will follow him. It is important that in our schools students hear God's message daily and have the opportunity to discuss how they are going to live out their faith at home, school, church and in the community. Serving others was God's message and students should have opportunities to explore how they can serve others. Research has shown benefits from altruistic volunteering, it makes you happier. If students are taught to serve others and put others first before their own needs as they grow older this should result in higher level of stewardship in our communities.

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 attend Mass weekly and at least once during the week. I am part of a rosary group with the intention to join the group in prayer on a weekly basis. I have a membership with "Living In Christ" and use the social media platform "Formed" for faith development. Daily prayer is important to me.

I believe in the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, and participated in a Walk for Life and Life Chain this past year. I participated in committee work with Voice for Life with a focus on promoting a contest highlighting Mother and Child and celebrating new life to elementary school aged children.

I have supported numerous petitions that supported health care professional's CONSCIENCE rights and the right to life from birth to natural death.

I am involved with St. Mary's Cemetery Committee as a secretary.

I recently mobilized a petition in my neighborhood with a deputation to the Police Service Board and council to strive to get traffic calming measures in our neighbourhood for traffic and pedestrian safety.

At this time in my life I am looking for more ways to serve others.

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 board has a Faith Advisory Committee and if elected I would request the opportunity to sit on this committee to learn how the Catholic board engages students in faith development and with their sacramental needs. It is important that our students have regular opportunity to receive the sacraments in the school environment and to attend mass. I have a keen interest to learn more about the Religious and Family Life Education program and how schools work collaboratively with parishes to ensure that the sacramental needs of Catholic students are met.

At the high school level I would engage with the chaplain to see how the sacramental needs of high school students are being met.

I would attend school sacramental celebrations to witness how students sacramental needs are met.

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?

To see that teachers and schools have the necessary resources to meet student needs. To assess the need for peer support or after school tutoring to help students excel in their studies.

Reaching out to teachers and parent student councils to obtain feedback on student achievement and resources required to reach student achievement.

I would take every opportunity to attend school events and make myself available to obtain feedback from all stakeholders on what the board can do to encourage students success and the opportunity to celebrate their successes.

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 plan to continue to attend Mass weekly and meet my Sunday obligation. By being visually present at Mass, attending any church and social activities and being approachable and welcoming for conversation will help me maintain valuable contact with parishes, priests and bishops.

I would make a point to have regular contact with our local priests to solicit their input and advise of board activities . I would also introduce myself to the Bishop to open a line of communication.

If elected, I would discuss with my local priest about having a monthly trustee update in the bulletin to keep the parishoners informed on school and board activities.

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?

Any elected Catholic trustee will need to continue to advocate for the rights of Catholics to educate their children in separate Catholic funded schools. This right was enshrined in the constitution in 1867 and needs to be protected.

Opponents argue that Catholic schools resemble the public schools and Catholicity is no longer front and centre.

The challenge for Catholic school boards across Ontario is maintaining their Catholicity and uniqueness. A student does not need to be Catholic to attend a Catholic school. As well the requirement for mandatory religion classes can and have been waived for students. However students and families who are not Catholic need to understand that by enrolling in a Catholic school they are entering a faith based community. That are Catholic identity is celebrated and Christ-focused.

As a trustee I would encourage Catholic elementary schools with bridging their graduates towards attending Catholic high school. Early introduction to the Catholic high school system and allowing for bridging so elementary students in their graduate year have the opportunity to experience the high school environment through different activities throughout the year.

I will encourage families who decide to attend Catholic schools that they support Catholic education with their tax dollars. I was suprised with my campaign how often I came across Catholics who were unaware their tax dollars were supporting the public education system.

I would advocate that Catholic schools are growing. I know in our local board a new high school and elementary school are being built based on need.

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?

Regular attendance at board meetings.

Requesting updates from the Religious and Family Life Consultant on the goals as it relates to faith development and determine how they are being met and measured objectively.

Obtaining a full understanding of the Religious and Family Life Education program.

Attending meet the teacher night and obtaining feedback from parents on the Religious and Family Life Education program.

Keeping open lines of communication with parents through visible presence at school and church.

Keep parents informed via regular connection through print and media.

I would take advantage of any Board education opportunities. I would be actively engaged at board meetings.

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?

Board meetings should be open to the public and due to the distance that constituents of Norfolk have to travel to meetings in Brantford, I will advocate that meetings are live-streamed.

I would also make myself available to any stakeholder to meet either face to face, by phone or email.



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

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!

SUBMIT - SEND BACK TO CATHOLIC CONSCIENCE