

Thinking of Running as a Catholic School Board Trustee?

A Handbook for Prospective Candidates



Find out what you need to know!



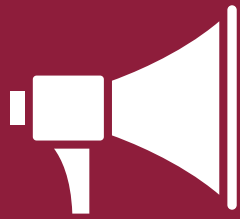
The 5 Marks of Catholic Education

1. Inspired by a Supernatural Vision
2. Founded on a Christian Anthropology
3. Animated by Communion and Community
4. Imbued with a Catholic Worldview through its Curriculum
5. Sustained by Gospel Witness

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Did You Know?

Denominational separate schools existed in Alberta even before it became a province!

Separate schools were a critical part of the reason Confederation was able to happen in the first place. As Prime Minister Sir Charles Tupper stated in 1896:

"... I say it within the knowledge of all these gentlemen... that but for the consent to the proposal of the Hon. Sir Alexander Galt, who represented especially the Protestants of the Great Province of Quebec on that occasion, but for the assent of that conference to the proposal of Sir Alexander Galt, that in the Confederation Act should be embodied a clause which would protect the rights of minorities, whether Catholic or Protestant, in this country, there would have been no Confederation I say, therefore, it is important, it is significant that without this clause, without this guarantee for the rights of minorities being embodied in that new constitution, we should have been unable to obtain any confederation whatever."

(Debates of the House of Commons, March 3, 1896, col. 2719-2724)

The separate school system is a cornerstone of Canada's heritage as a nation that is tolerant of minorities. It helps to ensure that members of the denominational minority can educate their children in accordance with the teachings of their faith. Additionally, it guarantees that taxes paid by the denominational minority for education will be used to fund those same schools.



Prayer of Discernment

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with hearts open to Your guidance. As we reflect on the possibility of serving our community through the role of Catholic school board trustee, grant us the wisdom to discern Your will.

Help us to weigh the responsibilities and challenges that come with this role with a spirit of humility and service.

Grant us courage and peace to trust in Your plan, whatever it may be, for the betterment of our publicly funded Catholic education system.

May we always seek to honor You in our choices and actions.

We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.



Introduction

Thank you for taking this important step in understanding the role of a Catholic school board trustee in Alberta. Your commitment is crucial to ensuring the continued success of our publicly funded Catholic school system.

This handbook has been created to guide prospective candidates - both new and incumbents - as you consider running in the next municipal election. It provides essential information about the role of Catholic school board trustees, and the unique mission of publicly funded Catholic education. Our goal is to provide an overview of the responsibilities, challenges, and rewards involved in serving as a Catholic school board trustee and to support you in discerning this important calling.

Strong Catholic school board trustees are essential for guiding separate schools in their mission to integrate faith and education. They play a pivotal role in shaping policies that reflect our Catholic values, supporting students in their spiritual, academic, and personal growth, and ensuring that the distinctive identity of publicly funded Catholic education is preserved for future generations.

We hope you find this resource helpful and appreciate your interest in Catholic school trusteeship.



Brendan Cavanagh
Executive Director, ACSTA



Who is ACSTA?

The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) exists to champion publicly funded Catholic education and ensure its continued presence as an integral part of the educational landscape in Alberta, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. Since its formation in 1966, ACSTA has been dedicated to serving its 24 member boards by advocating for the rights and values of publicly funded Catholic education.

ACSTA plays a crucial role in supporting Catholic school boards by facilitating faith formation for trustees and by advocating at the provincial level. ACSTA provides both fellowship and professional development opportunities for Catholic school board trustees and provides a platform for meaningful dialogue on issues affecting Catholic education at the provincial and territorial levels.

Through its mission, vision, and core purpose, ACSTA strives to provide a single advocacy voice for publicly funded Catholic education so as to protect the constitutional rights of our membership:



Mission

Celebrate, preserve, promote, and enhance Catholic education.

Vision

"That all have access to a publicly funded Catholic education."

Core Purpose

We are committed to a unified voice providing spiritual and political leadership for publicly funded Catholic education.

24 Member Boards

- Calgary RCSSD
- Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY)
- Christ the Redeemer CSSD
- Conseil scolaire FrancoSud
- Conseil scolaire Centre-Est
- Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord
- Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest
- East Central Alberta CSSD
- Edmonton CSSD
- Elk Island CSSD
- Evergreen CSSD
- Fort McMurray RCSSD
- Grande Prairie RCSSD
- Greater St. Albert RCSSD
- Holy Family CSSD
- Holy Spirit RCSSD
- Lakeland RCSSD
- Living Waters CSSD
- Lloydminster RCSSD
- Medicine Hat RCSSD
- Red Deer CSSD
- St. Paul School Division
- St. Thomas Aquinas RCSSD
- Yellowknife Catholic Schools



Provincial Partners in Catholic Education

ACSTA stands as a steadfast advocate and partner in publicly Catholic education, ensuring that its unique identity and mission continue to thrive for future generations.

ACSTA works closely with the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, as well as the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA). We also collaborate with Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education (GrACE) and the Conseil de l'éducation de la foi catholique chez les francophones de l'Alberta (CÉFFA). All these provincial bodies work together to advocate for and support one another in advancing the unique mission of publicly funded Catholic education in our communities.



The Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories | Les évêques catholiques de l'Alberta et des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

8421 - 101 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6A 0L1 | T 780.469.1010 F 780.465.3003



CCSSA | Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta



Letter From The ACSTA Bishop Liasion

Mission Advancement - Communications



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton

ACSTA Trustee Election Handbook Archbishop's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Before all else, I wish to thank you for considering a leadership role as a Catholic school trustee and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association for providing this handbook.

Publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta is a precious gift. I see that every time I visit a school division to meet with students and teachers, superintendents and staff and trustees who are excited to be on the journey of learning and growing in faith together.

As a candidate for trustee, you are taking an extraordinary step to bring your experience, strength and hope to help chart the direction of Catholic schools. You will help your school division in the formation of confident witnesses to the Gospel, one of the three pastoral priorities of this Archdiocese.

The role of trustee is also one that comes with a certain amount of vulnerability. You will face many challenges – both internal and external. We cannot take publicly funded Catholic education for granted. When we do, we risk losing it forever.

You have made a commitment to uphold a sacred trust to strengthen, defend, and further Catholic education in our province. You will face challenges both as a candidate and as an elected trustee. It will take courage and boldness both to expand and strengthen Catholic education.

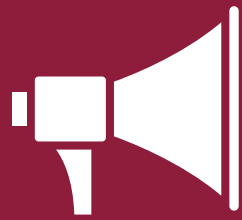
As you consider your candidacy, I offer a reminder that the Five Marks of Catholic Education are the pillars that provide the structure for our Catholic schools. The decisions and actions must always be guided by the view that each student is a precious child of God.

Please know that my brother bishops and I are praying for you. As the Alberta and Northwest Territories Bishops' Liaison for Catholic Education, I will support you in any way I can. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Yours sincerely in our Lord,

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

tel 780.469.1010 8421 101 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6A 0L1 www.caedm.ca



Did You Know?

The Catholic Church has been a cornerstone of education for centuries, establishing itself as the largest non-governmental provider of education worldwide.

In Canada, and particularly in Alberta, the Catholic Church continues to play a vital role in providing education. Catholic schools today remain an option for both Catholic and non-Catholic families who desire a Catholic education for their children.



A Brief History of the Protections on Catholic Education

In Canada

Catholic education in Canada began in 1620 with the founding of the first school by Recollets Missionaries at the colony of Quebec. The Jesuit missionaries followed with the establishment of the Collège du Québec in 1635. The landscape of education diversified over the centuries, with Anglican schools appearing in the 18th century and non-denominational schools emerging in the mid-19th century.

The rights of minority denominational schooling were a major point of contention in the lead up to Confederation. To protect the denominational minorities, in Ontario and Quebec, the Canadian Constitution of 1867 included provisions for minority denominational education rights. This protection was a crucial element in the formation of Canada as a nation and was later reaffirmed in section 29 of the 1982 *Constitution Act* (The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms).



In Alberta

Catholic education in Alberta began in 1842 with the Lac St. Anne Mission, established by Fr. Jean-Baptiste Thibeault. By 1859, the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, or the Grey Nuns, had opened a formal Catholic school there.

The *Alberta Act* of 1905 confirmed the constitutional protection of separate Catholic schools, distinguishing them from public schools. This protection ensures that Catholic education remains a vital part of Alberta's publicly funded education system. It also aligns with and reinforces the province's longstanding commitment to school choice.

Catholic Trusteeship in Alberta

Catholic trusteeship in Alberta is distinct from public trusteeship because of its obligations to both civil and Canon Law.

Catholic school board trustees are given the unique responsibility to oversee Catholic education in Alberta as a direct extension of the mission of the Catholic Church. These responsibilities are deeply connected to the denominational rights that protect the ability of Catholic schools to operate according to their faith. This responsibility is entrusted to Catholic school board trustees by the local Bishop, who provides guidance and to ensure Catholic schools align with the teachings of the Church. A school is only Catholic if it is recognized as such by the Bishops (see Canon 803 on page 11).

Catholic school board trustees do more than govern schools; they safeguard its Catholic identity by promoting faith permeation, ensuring that Catholic values guide educational decisions, and supporting the spiritual development of both staff and students. In this respect, the role of a Catholic school board trustee is quite different from that of their public school board counterparts, whose role is almost completely defined by provincial legislation.

Aided by the Catholic Church and the *Constitution Act, 1867*, Catholic school board trustees are uniquely situated to safeguard the denominational rights of publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta while navigating the complexities of modern educational governance.



"Denominational rights" is a term that refers to the constitutional protections granted to faith-based schools to operate according to their religious beliefs and practices. These rights are enshrined in Section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and reaffirmed in Section 29 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



Rooted in Canon Law

The Catholic Church has issued many teachings on education in general and Catholic education in particular. Many of these teachings are codified in Canon Law:



Summaries of Key Canons

Can. 794 §1: The Church has a divine mission and special responsibility to educate, guiding individuals toward the fullness of Christian life.

Can. 803: Catholic schools must operate under ecclesiastical authority, teach according to Catholic doctrine, and have teachers who exemplify strong faith and moral integrity. Schools may not call themselves Catholic without approval from the Church.

Can. 804: The Church oversees all religious education, with bishops ensuring religious instructors are well-qualified in doctrine, Christian witness, and teaching ability.

Can. 805: Bishops have authority within their diocese to approve, appoint, or remove religion teachers if necessary for reasons of faith or morals.

Can. 806 §1: Bishops have the right to supervise all Catholic schools, including issuing general directives.

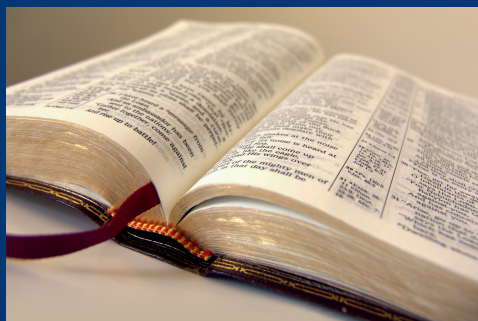
Can. 806 §2: Catholic school leaders must ensure academic standards match or exceed other local schools under the supervision of the local Bishop.

Can. 1284: Administrators must carefully manage Church assets, comply with civil and Church law, maintain financial transparency, protect property, and provide yearly financial reports to safeguard the Church's mission.



Practical Application

Catholic school board trustees, guided by the Bishops, serve to ensure the mission of publicly funded Catholic education is faithfully upheld. They align their civil responsibilities under provincial legislation with their commitment to fulfilling the spiritual and moral imperatives outlined in Canon Law.



"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other."

Matthew 6:24

This serves as a practical reminder for Catholic school board trustees to remain steadfast in their service to Christ and the mission of Catholic education, ensuring that their decisions reflect the faith and values at the heart of their work.

Denominational Rights

What Are These Rights?

As with other constitutionally protected collective rights in Canada, the full extent of the privileges granted to separate denominational schools remains an ongoing question for the courts. However, legal precedent has established at least the following:

- **Right of a Separate School Elector to Establish a Separate School District** - Separate school electors have the constitutional right to establish a separate school district.
- **Exclusive Powers of Management and Control** - Catholic school board trustees (within their school board governance role) exclusively manage and control their schools. (i.e. the denominational aspects and directly related aspects which are non-denominational in nature). This includes overseeing governance, implementing Catholicity based board policies and human resources-related administrative procedures and practices, and ensuring that all aspects of the schools reflect Catholic teachings and values.
- **Modeling Catholic Teachings** - Catholic school board trustees and school personnel are expected to emulate and model the teachings of the Catholic Church. This extends beyond academics to providing a personal example and fostering a school community grounded in faith and Catholic tradition.
- **Faith Permeation and Integration** - Catholic schools have the right to incorporate religious teachings throughout the curriculum and school life. Faith is not confined to religion classes but permeates and is integrated within all subjects and the entire school. The concept of Catholicity permeating the entire school day helps foster and maintain a holistic Catholic worldview and culture within the school community.
- **Autonomy in Policy and Faith** - Catholic school board trustees have the authority (within their governance role) to take matters of religious faith into account when setting and enforcing policies. This ensures that all school operations are consistent with Catholic doctrine and the Church's moral principles.
- **Preferential Hiring and Dismissal for Denominational Cause** - Catholic schools have the right to hire, promote and dismiss teachers on a denominational basis. A teacher can be disciplined or dismissed for cause if their conduct conflicts with school rules which are based on the Church's teachings, philosophy and/or traditions. This is to ensure that the denominational character of Catholic schools aligns with the mission of Catholic teachings - without which the denominational nature of a Catholic school would be in name only.
- **Taxation Autonomy and Equitable Funding** - Catholic electors have the right to support their Catholic schools through property taxes. They are also entitled to equitable government funding, ensuring their ability to provide high-quality education on par with public schools.



How Are These Rights Protected?

The constitutional rights and privileges in relation to denominational schools are not found in one document. Rather, denominational school rights and privileges relating to Catholic education are protected through several constitutional and legal mechanisms in Canada. Here are the key mechanisms:

- **Constitution Act, 1867 (Section 93)** At the time of Confederation, Catholic minorities in Ontario and Protestant minorities in Quebec wished to protect their ability to educate their children in their religion without interference by the majority. Section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, which grants provinces exclusive jurisdiction over education, also includes section 93(1) ensuring that provinces do not adversely affect the denominational nature of separate schools. While section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, guarantees pre-existing denominational school rights and privileges in each province to the extent they were protected by law at the time of Confederation, it does not purport to define or describe those rights and privileges.
- **Northwest Territories Ordinances, 1901** In 1870 Canada's Parliament was given the right to legislate for the future welfare and good government of the peoples in the North-west Territories. The 1901 NWT Ordinances set out separate school rights and privileges which include the right to establish separate school districts, the right of taxation of separate schools and the governance of separate school ratepayers over separate schools. Denominational school rights and privileges set out in the 1901 NWT Ordinances were constitutionally entrenched in Alberta and Saskatchewan at the time of the creation of those provinces in 1905.
- **Alberta Act, 1905 (Section 17)** Chapters 29 and 30 of the 1901 NWT Ordinances were specifically adopted by reference in section 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*, and as a result, the rights and privileges within the 1901 NWT Ordinances benefit from constitutional status. Section 17 guarantees the ability of Catholic schools in Alberta to operate as separate denominational institutions which includes all rights and powers necessary to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools.
- **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Section 29)** Section 29 of the Charter reaffirms and continues the constitutional rights and privileges in respect of denominational schools. Nothing in the Charter can undermine any rights or privileges guaranteed by the *Constitution Act, 1867*, with respect to denominational separate schools (including section 33 of the Charter, the "notwithstanding clause").
- **Judicial Precedents** All levels of the Canadian judiciary – including the Supreme Court of Canada – have upheld the denominational rights of separate schools in numerous cases. These rulings span the earliest days of Confederation to the present era. They affirm that the constitutional rights of separate school boards extend to the management and control over the denominational aspects of their schools (as well as non-denominational aspects directly related thereto), the right to hire/promote/discipline/dismiss teachers based on denominational cause (including their suitability to be role models in Catholic schools), and the right to deliver Catholic education.
- **Provincial Legislation & Regulation** While provincial governments hold jurisdiction over education, legislation and regulation such as *Alberta's Education Act* and related regulations including the *Establishment of Separate School Districts Regulation*, the Province of Alberta is required to align with the constitutional protections on separate schools, which serves to further affirm the rights and privileges of publicly funded Catholic separate schools.



Role of a Catholic School Board Trustee

As stewards of Catholic education and agents of the Catholic Church, Catholic school board trustees play a vital role in safeguarding the denominational rights and mission of publicly funded Catholic schools. Understanding the constitutional and legal protections for publicly funded Catholic education equips Catholic school board trustees to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. Here's what these rights mean for trustees in practice:

- **Advocating for Constitutional Protections** - Catholic school board trustees must be vigilant in defending the constitutional rights that guarantee the autonomy and mission of publicly funded Catholic schools. This includes articulating and asserting these rights during interactions with government officials, policymakers, and community stakeholders. Catholic school board trustees should ensure any proposed legislation, policy, or decision is constitutional with respect to denominational separate schools.
- **Maintaining Faith-Centered Governance** - Catholic school board trustees are responsible for ensuring the governance and policies of publicly funded Catholic schools align with the teachings and mission of the Catholic Church. This includes creating and enforcing policies that reflect Catholic values and taking matters of faith into account in decision-making processes.
- **Promoting Fairness in Funding and Resources** - Catholic school board trustees must ensure that publicly funded Catholic schools receive equitable funding, as guaranteed under constitutional and legislative mechanisms. They should also actively monitor funding policies to ensure that funding policies do not in any way compromise the governance autonomy of Catholic school boards.
- **Ensuring Faithful Leadership** - The most important responsibility of Catholic school board trustees is hiring a chief superintendent who embodies Catholic values, who personally supports the mission of publicly funded Catholic education, and who has the fortitude to execute that mission. Without dedicated faith-filled leadership at this level, it is very difficult for Catholic school board trustees (or anyone else) to ensure the Catholicity of the school division.
- **Modeling and Inspiring Catholic Values** - As leaders within Catholic education, Catholic school board trustees are called to model the teachings of the Catholic Church in their own lives. Their actions and decisions should reflect a Christ-centered approach, inspiring the school community to do the same.
- **Educating and Engaging the Community** - Catholic school board trustees have a role in educating families, parishioners, and the wider community about the importance of the denominational rights of separate schools. By cultivating understanding and support for publicly funded Catholic education, Catholic school board trustees help sustain these rights for future generations.
- **Defending Religious Freedom** - When legal or political challenges arise, Catholic school board trustees must take a firm stand to protect the religious freedoms of publicly funded Catholic schools. This includes defending the right to integrate faith throughout all aspects of education and resisting efforts to dilute and compromise our Catholic identity.
- **Planning for the Future** - Catholic school board trustees are not only guardians of Catholic education today but also architects of its future. They must remain proactive in addressing emerging challenges while ensuring that Catholic schools continue to thrive and maintain their distinct mission in a changing society.

Catholic School Board Trustees ARE:

- **Policy Makers:** As members of Catholic school boards, a Catholic school board trustee reviews and adopts policies to guide schools in fulfilling their faith-based mission.
- **Employers:** A Catholic school board trustee hires and evaluates the superintendent to ensure strong leadership and alignment with Catholic values.
- **Advocates:** A Catholic school board trustee champions publicly funded Catholic education at the local, provincial, and national level.
- **Stewards:** A Catholic school board trustee sets and adopts budgets to support both educational excellence and faith formation.
- **Strategic Leaders:** A Catholic school board trustee engages in strategic planning to shape the future of Catholic education at the school board level.
- **Communicators:** A Catholic school board trustee builds bridges between schools, parishes, and communities to foster collaboration and understanding.

Catholic School Board Trustees Are NOT:

- **Independent Authorities:** A Catholic school board trustee does *not* act independently of the collective board. They do *not* govern without consideration for and alignment with the local Catholic Bishop. Their role is to collaborate within the board and in alignment with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- **School Administrators:** A Catholic school board trustee is *not* involved in the day-to-day management or operation of schools. Their job is to hire a faith-filled and competent Catholic school administrator to carry out that work on their behalf.
- **Teachers or Curriculum Writers:** A Catholic school board trustee does *not* write or teach curriculum. Trustees are to ensure the chief administrator is prioritizing faith-permeation of curriculum in Catholic schools, and that he or she has the resources to do so.
- **Politicians for Secular Interests:** A Catholic school board trustee prioritizes the mission of Catholic education over partisan or secular concerns. A Catholic school board trustee *cannot* separate their role from their Catholic faith. Their responsibilities are deeply rooted in Catholic values and the mission of the Church.
- **Public School Trustees:** A Catholic school board trustee is distinct from a public trustee due to their responsibility to uphold the faith-based mission of publicly funded Catholic education. They are accountable to Catholic ratepayers, guided by Church teaching (as expressed in Scripture, Canon Law and magisterial documents) and deferential to the Bishops.

Where Can I Learn More?

To learn more about the day to day work of a Catholic school board trustee, contact your local Catholic school board, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, your local Bishop, or someone who is currently serving (or who has previously served) as a Catholic school board trustee.

They can provide insights into the role of Catholic trusteeship, as well as Alberta's publicly funded Catholic education system.



I'm in!

How Do I Put My Name Forward?

(1) *Ensure You Are Eligible*

You are eligible to be nominated as a candidate, if on Nomination Day you are:

- a Catholic;
- at least 18 years of age;
- a Canadian citizen;
- a resident of the Catholic School Division and the Ward they are running in, 6 months before Nomination Day;
- have been a resident of the local jurisdiction and the ward for the six consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day; and
- are not otherwise ineligible.¹

What does "Catholic" mean?

The Catholic Church defines a 'Catholic' as a person who:

a. has undergone the Sacrament of Baptism or been officially received into the Catholic Church according to the Rites of Initiation;

b. is in full communion with the Church hierarchy, including the Pope and bishops in communion with him,²



¹Local Authorities Election Act s.47, s 21 & Education Act s74

²CCC s.836 - 838; Code of Canon Law 11, 204 §1-2, 205-207, 830-838

Catholic Rites vs. Protestant Denominations

This table is intended to help prospective Catholic school board trustees understand which Rites (in addition to the Western/Roman Rite) are considered to be within the 'Roman Catholic Church', for the purposes of determining eligibility for roles such as Catholic school board trustee. It's crucial for trustees to grasp the importance of and embody Catholic identity in their governance roles, reflecting the Church's teachings and traditions.

Catholic Rites	Protestant Denominations
<p><u>Alexandrian Tradition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coptic Catholic Church • Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church <p><u>Antiochian Tradition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite Catholic Church • Syrian Catholic Church • Syro-Malankara Catholic Church <p><u>Armenian Tradition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenian Catholic Church <p><u>Chaldean or Eastern Syrian Tradition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaldean Catholic Church • Syro-Malabar Catholic Church <p><u>Byzantine or Constantinopolitan Tradition (Greek Catholic)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melkite Greek Catholic Church • Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church • Romanian Greek Catholic Church • Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church • Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo • Hungarian Greek Catholic Church • Slovak Greek Catholic Church • Ruthenian Catholic Apostolic Exarchate of Czech Republic • Italo-Albanian Catholic Church • Greek Catholic Apostolic Exarchate for Serbia • Greek Catholic Eparchy of Križevci • Apostolic Exarchate in the Republic of Macedonia • Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church • Greek Byzantine Catholic Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance • Anglican Church of Canada • Baptist • Christian Reform • Christian Science • Church of the Nazarene • Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) • Eastern Orthodox • Foursquare • Jehovah's Witness • Lutheran • Mennonite • Methodist • Pentecostal • Presbyterian • Salvation Army • Seventh Day Adventist • The Church of England • Ukrainian Orthodox • Unitarian • United Church of Canada

³Establishing a Separate School District Information Package, Government of Alberta, pages 7-8

What's Next?

(2) Get Your Name on The Ballot

1. Fill out the **Notice of Intent** form available online from the Government of Alberta at <https://www.alberta.ca/school-board-elections-guide>.
2. Complete the Nomination Package
Each local school board or municipal elections authority has their own forms and requirements. Your local authority can also tell you how many signatures are needed on your nomination paper and who is eligible to sign your nomination papers.

In addition, you will be required to complete **Form 4 - Nomination Paper and Candidate's Acceptance** and **Form 5 - Candidate Information**, which are provided by your local returning officer, municipal elections authority or local school board office.

3. Submit your Nomination Package
This is usually done at your local school division office. Please confirm this information with your local school board office.

For additional information, you can also visit <https://www.asba.ab.ca/municipal-elections>.



Are You Being Called?

Tips for Discernment

- **Chat with Your local Bishop:** Meet and discuss your desire to run with your local Bishop. He can provide both spiritual and practical ways to help you make a decision.
- **Pray and Reflect:** Spend time in prayer to determine if this role aligns with the gifts God has given you to serve the Catholic community.
- **Understand the Commitment:** Research the time commitment involved, including board and committee meetings, professional development, and community engagements.
- **Learn About Catholic Education:** Familiarize yourself with the mission of publicly Catholic education and the unique responsibilities of a Catholic school board trustee.
- **Engage with Current and Past Trustees:** Speak with current or former Catholic school board trustees to gain insights into the role's challenges and rewards.
- **Attend Board Meetings:** Observe Catholic school board meetings that are open to the public to learn how trustees interact, make decisions, and represent their communities.



Other tips to help you succeed

- **Develop Leadership Skills:** Consider ways to strengthen your abilities in collaboration, decision-making, and conflict resolution.
- **Understand Governance and Policy:** Gain a basic understanding of how school boards operate and how provincial legislation impacts publicly funded Catholic education.
- **Enhance Communication Skills:** Be prepared to engage with parents, parishioners, and other stakeholders as a representative of publicly funded Catholic education. Enhance your public speaking skills.
- **Learn About Advocacy:** Understand the role Catholic school board trustees play in advocating for Catholic education with government and other organizations.

Tips for Campaigning



Know the Role

Before launching your campaign, it's crucial to have a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Catholic school board trustee. Catholic school board trustees are elected to represent the interests of publicly funded Catholic schools and the broader Catholic community. Being well-versed in the responsibilities will help you communicate your vision effectively to voters.



Develop Your Platform

Your campaign platform should reflect your commitment to publicly funded Catholic education and the values it embodies. Focus on key issues that are important to the Catholic community, such as supporting religious education, promoting faith-based learning environments, and advocating for educational choice. Clearly outline your goals and the actions you plan to take to achieve them if elected. Your platform should be concise, clear, and consistent with the mission of Catholic education as taught by the Catholic Church.

Build a Strong Campaign Team

A successful campaign requires a dedicated team. Assemble a group of faith-filled volunteers who share your commitment to publicly funded Catholic education and can help you reach voters effectively. Your team should include individuals with skills in communication, social media management, event planning, and community outreach. Choose people that can help you connect with the various branches of the Catholic community.



Engage the Catholic Community

Connecting with the Catholic voters is essential for any successful campaign. Attend local parish events and community gatherings to meet potential voters and discuss your platform. Listen to the concerns and ideas of community members, and be prepared to explain how you plan to address these issues. Engaging with the community demonstrates your commitment to serving their needs and helps build trust and support.



Utilize Effective Communications

Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that includes both traditional and digital methods. Provide regular updates with information about your platform, upcoming events, and ways to get involved. Consistent and clear messaging across all channels will help you build a strong presence and connect with voters.

Participate in Candidate Forums

Forums and debates are opportunities to showcase your knowledge, passion, and commitment to publicly funded Catholic education. These events provide a platform to discuss your ideas and demonstrate your ability to represent the community effectively. Be prepared to answer questions about your platform, your vision for publicly funded Catholic education, your own commitment to the Catholic faith and how you plan to address the challenges facing publicly funded Catholic schools in Alberta.

Endorsements & Fundraising

As you campaign, consider how your endorsements, fundraising efforts, and public messaging reflect the values of Catholic education. Transparency and integrity are crucial to building trust with your community, parish, and stakeholders. Always ask yourself: Does this align with the Church's mission for publicly funded Catholic education?

Stay Informed

It's important to stay informed about current issues affecting publicly funded Catholic schools and be prepared to adapt your campaign accordingly. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to new developments will show voters that you are attentive and capable of handling the responsibilities of a Catholic school board trustee.

Conduct a Positive and Ethical Campaign

As a candidate for Catholic school board trustee, it is essential to run a campaign that reflects the values and principles of the Catholic faith. Conduct your campaign with integrity, honesty, and charity towards others. Focus on promoting your vision and qualifications rather than criticizing your opponents or playing on cynicism. A hope filled campaign will resonate with voters, strengthen your reputation within the community and provide an inspiring example to all of what virtuous Catholic leadership looks like.

"Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another."
Romans 14:19

Closing Message

Catholic school board trustees are stewards of the publicly funded Catholic separate educational system. They ensure that our schools remain true to their mission of fostering both academic excellence and spiritual growth. A good Catholic school board trustee understands the distinctive denominational identity of and values inherent in Catholic education and is committed to upholding them in every decision they make.

By stepping up to run as a candidate for Catholic school board trustee, you are committing to be a steward of our faith-based education system, advocating for the needs of students and prioritizing their spiritual as well as academic development. Your leadership can help shape a vibrant future for our schools, ensuring that they continue to be places where faith, community, and education complement one another and flourish together.



"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Colossians 3:17



List of Key Dates for the 2025 Municipal Election

Nominations can be filed starting **Wednesday, January 1, 2025.**

Nominations will be accepted until noon on **Monday, September 22, 2025**

The Municipal and School Board general election is **Monday, October 20, 2025.**



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