

Could *You* Be A Catholic School Board Trustee?



Archdiocese
of Toronto

A RESOURCE TO HELP GUIDE DISCERNMENT: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 Why should I consider becoming a Catholic school board trustee?

Serving as a Catholic school board trustee is an opportunity to place your faith, gifts and experience at the service of Christ, His Church and future generations of students. Through their governance role, trustees help ensure that Catholic schools remain faithful to their mission of forming young people in faith, knowledge and virtue while supporting educational excellence. For many trustees, this is not simply a public office—it is a vocation of service.

2 Why are Catholic school trustees important?

Catholic trustees help preserve one of the Church's most important ministries. Their leadership helps ensure that Catholic schools continue to:

- proclaim the Gospel through every aspect of school life;
- place Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of students' learning experiences;
- support parents as the primary educators of their children;
- foster communities rooted in prayer and faith;
- provide an education inspired by Catholic values; and
- prepare young people to become faithful disciples and responsible citizens.

3 What does a Catholic school trustee do?

Catholic school trustees provide governance and strategic leadership for their local Catholic school board. Among their responsibilities are:

- safeguarding and promoting the Catholic identity of the school systems;
- establishing policies, strategic priorities and annual budget;
- exercising responsible stewardship of public resources;
- supporting student achievement, faith formation and well-being;

- working collaboratively with fellow trustees and senior administration; and
- advocating for the value and mission of Catholic education.

Trustees establish and monitor direction and policy. They do not manage the day-to-day operations of schools.

4 Who should consider serving?

You may wish to discern this ministry if you:

- are a practicing Catholic committed to the teachings of the Church;
- value the gift of Catholic education;
- possess integrity, humility and sound judgment;
- enjoy working collaboratively with others;
- have a desire to serve your community; and
- believe your gifts could benefit the Church, students and families.

No particular professional background is required. Trustees come from many walks of life.

"The Church depends upon faithful lay women and men who are willing to place their gifts at the service of Christ and His people. If you have been invited to consider serving as a Catholic school board trustee, take that invitation to prayer. The Lord often calls us in simple and unexpected ways. Ask Him whether this may be the way He is inviting you to help preserve and strengthen the gift of Catholic education for future generations."

— Frank Cardinal Leo

Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto



5 What qualities make an effective trustee?

Faithful Catholic trustees are called to be:

- prayerful;
- compassionate;
- collaborative;
- prudent;
- respectful;
- courageous;
- committed to lifelong learning; and
- motivated by service rather than personal recognition.

6 How much time does serving require?

The commitment varies depending on the size of the board and committee assignments. Trustees generally attend regular board meetings, committee meetings, school and parish events, and spend time preparing for meetings and reading reports.

Before seeking election, it is important to discuss the commitment with your family and prayerfully consider whether this is the right time to serve.

7 Is this a paid position?

Trustees receive an honorarium established under provincial legislation. Most trustees, however, describe their service not as employment but as an opportunity to contribute to Catholic education and the life of the Church.

8 What if I have never held public office?

Many outstanding trustees had never run for elected office before. What matters most is a willingness to learn, to collaborate with others, and to serve faithfully. Training and orientation are provided to newly elected trustees.

9 Am I expected to know everything about education?

No. Trustees bring different experiences and perspectives. They receive orientation, faith formation and ongoing professional development throughout their term of office. A willingness to learn and to work collaboratively is more important than prior experience.

10 Who can become a school trustee?

To learn more about qualifications, please review the 2026 candidates' guide for Ontario municipal council and school board elections at <https://bit.ly/2026CandidatesGuide> or contact the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association at ocsta@ocsta.on.ca.

Generally, candidates must:

- be a Canadian citizen;
- be at least 18 years of age;
- live within the jurisdiction of the school board you want to represent;
- meet the qualifications to serve as a school board trustee; and
- be qualified to vote for the Catholic school board.

Prospective candidates should confirm the current eligibility requirements with their local municipality.

11 How do I become a candidate?

Nomination papers are filed with your local municipal clerk during the nomination period established for municipal elections. Information regarding deadlines, required forms and campaign rules is available through your local municipality. **The deadline for nomination in many municipalities is August 21, 2026.**

Before you say yes... Pray and reflect.

Perhaps someone has approached you and encouraged you to consider serving as a Catholic school trustee. You may be honoured by the invitation, excited by the opportunity, or perhaps even surprised. Before making a decision, take time to pray.

Throughout Sacred Scripture, God calls ordinary people to serve in extraordinary ways. Moses, Esther, Peter and countless others did not feel fully prepared when they were called. They responded not because they had every answer, but because they trusted that God would guide them.

The same is true today.

Serving as a Catholic school trustee is more than accepting a public office. It is an opportunity to place your gifts at the service of Christ, His Church and the young people entrusted to our Catholic schools.

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QUESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Your Relationship with Christ

- Am I striving to grow in my relationship with Jesus through prayer and the sacramental life of the Church?
- Do I desire to live and give witness to the Catholic faith in my family, workplace and community?
- Am I open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I make this decision?

Your Desire to Serve

- Why am I considering this opportunity?
- Do I see this as a way of serving others rather than serving myself?
- Am I willing to place the needs of students, families and the Church ahead of personal interests?

Your Gifts

- What gifts has God entrusted to me?
- How might my experience, skills and leadership benefit publicly funded Catholic education?
- Am I willing to continue learning and growing in this role?

Your Family

- Have I discussed this opportunity with my spouse and family?
- Will they support me in this commitment?
- Can I balance this responsibility with my family, work and parish life?

Your Commitment

- Am I prepared to collaborate respectfully with people who may hold different perspectives?
- Can I make the time necessary to prepare for meetings and fulfill the responsibilities of the office?
- Am I prepared to serve with humility, integrity and charity?

Trust God's Guidance

No one begins this journey perfectly prepared.

If you believe the Lord may be calling you to serve, trust that He will provide the wisdom, grace and strength needed for the task. Continue to pray, seek good counsel, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discernment.

Sometimes God's invitation begins with the simple encouragement of a pastor, a friend or a fellow parishioner.

If that invitation has come to you, take it seriously. It may be the beginning of a meaningful way to place your gifts at the service of Catholic education and the mission of the Church.

A Prayer for Discernment

Heavenly Father,

You call each of us to serve Your Kingdom according to the gifts You have entrusted to us.

Send Your Holy Spirit upon me as I discern whether You are inviting me to serve as a Catholic School Board Trustee.

Grant me wisdom to recognize Your will, courage to respond generously, and humility to seek not my own interests but the good of Your people.

Help me to support the mission of Catholic education, so that our schools may continue to form young people in faith, truth and love.

May my decisions always reflect the example of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

I entrust this discernment to the loving care of Mary, Seat of Wisdom, and ask the intercession of St. Michael, Patron of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



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