

Catholic Schools : Permeated By Faith

- ◆ Catholic Education is a unique partnership between the school, home and parish. Together, this triad seeks to develop a student's whole person by integrating academic excellence permeated by faith.
- ◆ Catholic education exists and will continue to do so because its central focus is Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Within that partnership, excellence in Catholic Education is achieved through the personal involvement of all members of the community.
- ◆ Saskatchewan has been blessed with a multi-dimensional public education system, of which Catholic education is an integral part.
- ◆ Catholic schools not only complement the public school system, but also provide an educational choice where student success and achievement thrive.
- ◆ Such a diverse public education system ensures that students in Saskatchewan have an opportunity to receive a Catholic faith-based education which challenges them to reach their learning potential.
- ◆ Catholic education is an indispensable part of the culture and education system in Saskatchewan.

“ In Catholic education we open up the hearts of our students to find Christ in places that society and culture will not go, but where Christ most assuredly can be found”

Quoted from
Build Bethlehem Everywhere 2002

Catholic Trustees Stewards for our Schools

The Catholic school trustee has a specific and unique vocation. This vocation is a call from the Church and the community to bring together faith and political life to share in the central mission of the church: passing our Catholic faith on to our children.

Catholic schools exist to offer Catholic parents a distinct system of education for their children. Through the democratic process, the trustees of a Catholic school board are empowered by the community to fulfill both the educational requirements set by the government and the vision of the faith community.

This presents Catholic trustees with a unique dual challenge. They must ensure that students are provided an education which includes literacy skills, the ability to interpret and communicate information, the skills to analyze quickly and creatively, and the knowledge for effective problem solving. In addition, a Catholic school board must ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected at all times in its policies and practices and witnessed in each of their schools. It is the work they do in the boardroom which will directly affect the permeation that takes place in Catholic schools in their jurisdiction.

The ability to fulfill both roles without compromise is paramount for Catholic school trustees. Their position as leaders in the faith community requires an understanding, a willingness to grow and a commitment to bear daily witness to the faith.

To meet this challenge, Catholic trustees in Saskatchewan are entrusted with certain denominational school rights, powers and privileges enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. They exercise these rights with the guidance of parish and diocesan authorities.

Roles and Responsibilities of Catholic Trustees

The Catholic school trustee has a multitude of roles and responsibilities, none of which can be taken lightly. All school boards in Saskatchewan are agents of the Provincial government and accountable to the Minister of Education.

Catholic school boards are also accountable to the Bishop of their diocese. Canon Law 806(1) states that “the diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He has also the right to issue directives concerning the general regulations of Catholic schools ...”. We are blessed in Saskatchewan to have tremendous support from our bishops and a wonderful working relationship with them.

Through policies and programs, the Catholic school trustee is instrumental in setting the environment for the formation of our children. The diverse roles of a Catholic trustee include, but are not limited to the following:

Politician

Trustees have a public responsibility to ensure their school divisions meets educational and financial guidelines issues by the government. There are also responsible to their electorate for ensuring that the Catholic community's beliefs and principles are reflected in the school division's policies and programs.

Goal Setter

Trustees provide corporate leadership for the school division. They set goals, and statements and of purpose and results which the board wishes to achieve.

Policy Maker

Trustees develop policies which guide administration and staff in achieving district goals and ensure that our Catholic teachings are permeated throughout the school division.

Planner

Trustees must also establish priorities to meet the goals set by the board, taking into account the desires of the community and the financial and human resources available. They must also be willing to devote a significant amount of time to their work as trustees.

Communicator

A trustee interacts with a variety of people: the electorate, who need to know that their concerns are being heard and considered; government; the media, school administrators and staff; clergy; and other board members. In all cases the need for clear and effective communication is essential.

Information Receiver and Disseminator

In order to make sound decisions, trustees must seek out pertinent information, keep up to date on educational matters, analyze the vast amount of data they receive and clearly communicate information.

Advocate for Education

The trustee is responsible for maintaining a positive image and high profile for Catholic education locally, provincially and nationally, by informing the community of the school division's accomplishments, acknowledging specific concerns and contributing to responsible solutions.

Role Model

The most significant role of a trustee is to walk the talk in and outside the boardroom. A Christian lifestyle and a personal commitment to the Catholic faith are basic and essential to the trustee's and the school divisions public credibility.

Faith for the Future

For the gift of Catholic education to endure beyond the present generation, it is the responsibility of all members of the faith community to heed the call to serve and support the formation of our children. Whether that call be a Catholic school trustee, educator or community supporter, the responsibility to show Christ to our students lies on all our shoulders. It is a great responsibility with many challenges, but boundless rewards.

Catholic trusteeship is a unique vocation which serves the church and the community, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The Catholic school trustee plays an integral part in ensuring that Christ is the heart and soul of every Catholic school. The uniqueness of Catholic education lies in the fact that its purpose and end is holiness. This is the legacy of which Catholic school trustees proudly take charge.

“Be it known to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher in its classrooms. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students.”

Author Unknown

Special note of thanks:

This document was revised with permission from the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association. “Ready to Serve: Becoming a Catholic School Trustee”

SCSBA



Saskatchewan Catholic
School Boards
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Becoming a Catholic School Trustee

Information brochure