



CATHOLIC TRUSTEES

Advocates, Guardians
& Stewards of
Catholic Education



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

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The third edition, December 2003, of *Educating Together: A Handbook for Trustees, School Boards and Communities* contains chapters on the roles and responsibilities of trustees, models of governance, education funding, program and curriculum, labour relations, school/community partnerships, communication and school councils, among other topics. This highly respected Handbook serves as an important resource document for trustees and board staff throughout the province. Valuable as this Handbook is, those who support Catholic education know that Catholic trustees, while attending faithfully to all of the responsibilities referenced in the Handbook, must also fulfill an additional mandate.

OCSTA's purpose in publishing the document *Catholic Trustees: Advocates, Guardians and Stewards of Catholic Education* is to outline those further roles and responsibilities that come with the mandate to represent Catholic education. In addition to carrying out those many responsibilities that they share with public school board trustees, Catholic trustees, as representatives of the Catholic community, must ensure that the mission of Catholic education, as part of the broader mission of the Church, is fulfilled. Because of this unique and distinctive mission, Catholic school trustees honour a set of additional expectations that have been set for them by their Church, by the Catholic community, by the

traditional understanding of the Catholic trustee's role and, of course, by the Ministry's *Education Act*. For the Catholic trustee, the Church's mission to proclaim, teach and witness to the Gospel finds its particular expression in the mission of the Catholic school. And the mission of the Catholic school is to evangelize youth so that they will become not only well-developed persons and good citizens but also faithful disciples of Christ and "witnesses to the faith!"

Listed on the following pages, are the Catholic school trustee responsibilities that are derived from that mission.

RESPONSIBILITIES

of the Catholic School Trustee in Publicly Funded English Catholic Education

Catholic trustees, acting as members of Catholic school boards, exercise the distinctive nature of their Catholic trusteeship in the following ways:

WITNESSING to the Faith

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Centre their lives in the person of Jesus Christ, the teaching and mission of the Catholic faith and the Gospel call to serve one another
- ✦ Express their faith in full communion with and participation in the faith life of the Catholic Church
- ✦ Recognize their vocational call to trusteeship as a *ministry of service* within the Church
- ✦ Reflect in their ministry a commitment to honouring the principles of Catholic social justice teaching
- ✦ Remain committed to spiritual growth as Catholic leaders through participation in faith formation activities and ongoing attention to and application of current Church teachings, especially those that may be related to educational issues
- ✦ Serve as role models by the way they conduct themselves individually and collectively in their educational vocation and ministry

UNDERSTANDING the Purpose, History and Distinctive Contribution of Catholic Education in Ontario

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Understand the religious purpose of Catholic education—the evangelization of youth—as part of the Church’s mission to proclaim, teach and witness the Gospel
- ✦ Know and celebrate the long and distinguished history of Catholic education in Ontario
- ✦ Value the significant contribution that Catholic education makes to the lives of the students, to the Catholic community and to the life and welfare of the larger community
- ✦ Exercise, in their collective function as a Catholic school board, a clearly defined role as advocates, guardians and stewards of Catholic education

PROMOTING, Protecting and Advocating for Catholic Education

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Understand and defend the constitutional right of the Catholic community to govern, control and manage Catholic schools
- ✦ Understand the rights, obligations and authority vested in Catholic school trustees acting as members of a Catholic school board

- ✦ Advocate for government policies that are in accordance with Catholic social teaching
- ✦ Advocate for government policy, legislation and funding that protects the distinctive nature of Catholic education and supports Ontario's fully funded Catholic school system
- ✦ Take leadership in promoting public understanding of and support for Catholic education
- ✦ Promote the value of Catholic education and the significant contribution it has made to Ontario society

ARTICULATING the System's Catholic Mission and Vision

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Establish, in consultation with staff and community, the board's educational mission that reflects the values, beliefs and teachings of the Catholic faith and the Catholic faith community
- ✦ Develop a shared vision for the system that reflects and promotes the board's distinctive mission and that articulates in specific terms what Catholic education will look like when it is operating according to its faith-filled purpose and mission

PROVIDING governance and policies inspired by the values and traditions of the Catholic faith and the principles of democratic and accountable governance

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Operate according to a model of democratic and accountable governance that integrates and embodies Catholic values and traditions.
- ✦ Develop policies critical to achieving the board's mission and vision as informed by Church teaching and Gospel values
- ✦ Establish the parameters for administrative operations and accountability.
- ✦ Ensure that all administrative operations and procedures are based on this vision of Catholic education and designed to achieve its realization

APPOINTING, Holding Accountable and Supporting a Director of Education Who Is an Authentic and Effective Catholic Leader

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Appoint, work together with and provide resources for a Director of Education who supports and is held accountable for the board's mission and vision and who is able and willing to work with the board, the staff and the community in the realization of the board's mission and vision

ENSURING That Administrative Structures, Operational Procedures and Employment Practices Reflect the Board Mission and Vision

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Establish employment and promotion policies related to the hiring, retention and appraisal of qualified administrators and staff committed to the board's Catholic educational mission
- ✦ Ensure that the Director of Education embodies Gospel values in appropriately and effectively implementing government and board policy and curricular programs, exercising sound stewardship, and developing effective management and labor relations practices

PROVIDING Christian Stewardship of Human and Financial Resources

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Establish budgets that reflect the spirit of Christian stewardship and assign resources honestly, appropriately and equitably
- ✦ Allocate human and financial resources to align with and support the board's mission, vision, policies, strategic goals, system priorities and implementation plans
- ✦ Monitor board management, fiscal and employment practices to ensure that they are in keeping with Catholic social justice principles and the board's mission and vision

ESTABLISHING Authentic Religious Education Programming and Faith Formation Activities for Students

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Ensure that Catholicity and faith formation are addressed across all subjects and disciplines so that students may realize that all learning speaks to the integration of faith and life and the integration of faith and culture
- ✦ Ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in the formal study of religion through the delivery of a comprehensive Religion and Family Life program across all grades
- ✦ Ensure that school programs are in place that nurture students in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church

ESTABLISHING a Climate Supportive of Faith Community

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Promote the welfare, well-being and dignity of all in the educational community
- ✦ Foster in the board and in schools and encourage in the local diocese and parishes a faith environment that nurtures faith development, spiritual growth and communal faith expression

- ✦ Support religious education and faith formation programs as well as opportunities for liturgical celebration and prayerful reflection

MONITORING Student Realization of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Ensure that Catholic schools deliberately aim to form students to be well-developed persons, good citizens and faith-filled believers as outlined in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- ✦ Expect that student formation will be grounded in faith formation, that curriculum is aligned with gospel values, that instruction is based on sound pedagogy, and that system and provincial assessment is just, equitable and respectful of persons in promoting student achievement and personal growth

MONITORING the Implementation and Realization of the Board's Mission and Vision

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Understand, individually and as an elected board, their accountability for service to their local constituency, staff and students in the system, the Catholic community, the provincial government and the general public in the light of the gospel call to stewardship

- ✦ Advocate on behalf of local ratepayers to ensure that legitimate concerns are being addressed by the board and system
- ✦ Strive to satisfy the high expectations and standards of performance set for them by the Catholic community
- ✦ Monitor system progress toward the realization of the board's mission and vision
- ✦ Provide accountable reporting to the Catholic community, the government and the people of Ontario demonstrating how the Catholic school system is fulfilling its distinctive mandate
- ✦ Provide for ongoing renewal of the board's mission and vision and ongoing improvement of the system's implementation and performance

BUILDING Significant Partnerships Within and Beyond the Catholic Community in Support of Catholic Education

Catholic school trustees:

- ✦ Work and communicate effectively with Catholic education partners, provincial and federal governments, community agencies and all who are involved in supporting and working with Catholic education
- ✦ Work and communicate effectively with the Catholic community, other Catholic trustees, especially the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) and member boards, the Ontario Conference

of Catholic Bishops (OCCB) and the Canadian Catholic
School Trustees' Association (CCSTA)



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

OUR MISSION

Inspired by the Gospel, we provide leadership, service and a provincial voice for Catholic School Boards in promoting and protecting Catholic education.

OUR VISION

In keeping with our Mission, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association:

Operational Values

- ✦ **Embodies** and promotes the values and traditions of our Catholic faith in all Association activities.
- ✦ **Respects** the principles of democratic and accountable governance.

Political Advocacy

- ✦ **Protects** the constitutional right of the Catholic community to govern, control and manage Catholic schools.
- ✦ **Promotes** education in our province that reflects the Catholic principles of social justice.
- ✦ **Advocates** for government recognition of the distinctive nature of Catholic education.
- ✦ **Advocates** for provincial policy, legislation and funding support that enable Catholic boards to provide quality Catholic education.

- ✦ **Influences** the strategic and political direction of the Ontario government and opposition parties regarding issues that impact Catholic education.

Information & Services

- ✦ **Provides** faith formation and professional development resources and opportunities for its members.
- ✦ **Provides** to member boards information and services that recognize their diverse circumstances and needs.

Communications & Public Relations

- ✦ **Develops** effective structures that enhance communication and working relationships among OCSTA and its member boards.
- ✦ **Communicates** with member Boards and Catholic partners regarding relevant educational issues and OCSTA activities.
- ✦ **Promotes** public understanding of and support for Catholic education.
- ✦ **Celebrates** and highlights Catholic education's significant and continuing contribution to Ontario society.

Partnerships

- ✦ **Stimulates** ongoing visioning of how Catholic education partners can collaborate to serve the interests of Catholic education.
- ✦ **Builds** significant partnerships within and beyond the Catholic community in support of Catholic education.



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*The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
represents all English-language Catholic District School
Boards and Catholic School Authorities in Ontario.*

*Committed to the promotion and protection of Ontario's
Catholic school system, OCSTA conveys the perspectives
and needs of English Catholic boards to the provincial
government on education issues and policies.*