

Trustee Candidate: Sinead Holstein

* Candidate profiles are published as submitted.

Who are you, and why are you running to be a trustee in Red Deer Catholic?	My name is Sinead Holstein. I am a married mother of 2, both of whom attend Catholic School in Red Deer. I am a registered parishioner at St. Mary’s and typically participate in early Mass on Sundays. While I grew up in the Yukon, I moved to Red Deer at the age of 16 and graduated from high school here and have proudly called this community home ever since. I am fluent in both English and French. I served as a Civilian Member with the RCMP for 16 years as a dispatcher, with all my service in Red Deer. This experience gave me a deep appreciation for clear communication, calm decision-making, and compassionate leadership. It also strengthens my ability to listen fairly, act without bias, de-escalate conflict, and make accountable decisions under pressure. I have often been told that I am approachable and that people feel comfortable sharing their concerns with me. I also strongly believe in advocacy for those who may not always have a voice or platform of their own. These qualities, combined with my professional experience and personal commitment as a parent, guide my approach to serving our Catholic school community with fairness, empathy, and a focus on ensuring that every student feels supported and valued. I am running for Catholic School Board Trustee because I believe that our schools should be places of welcome, where every child is encouraged to learn and grow as the person God created them to be. I am committed to ensuring that our decisions reflect not only the values of our faith but also the voices of parents and teachers who dedicate themselves to supporting our students. Further, I am committed to serving our students, families, and staff in the Catholic School Division with integrity and compassion. I believe that all children should feel loved, accepted, and welcome in their school environment. I will advocate for policies and resources that create and maintain safe, secure, and nurturing school communities for our teachers, students and families, while following the church’s teachings.
How should Catholic school trustees balance their responsibility to uphold and witness to the Catholic faith with their duty to represent a diverse community that may include people of other faiths or no faith at all?	As Catholic school trustees, we are called to uphold and witness our faith while also serving a diverse community. I believe these responsibilities complement one another when guided by Catholic values of dignity, compassion, and respect. In my 16 years as an RCMP dispatcher, I learned the importance of listening without judgment, de-escalating conflict, and ensuring that every voice is heard. These same skills are vital in school governance, where parents, teachers, and students bring forward concerns shaped by many perspectives. A trustee’s role is to hear those voices respectfully, seek common ground, and make decisions that reflect Catholic teachings while prioritizing the well-being of students. To me, witnessing to the Catholic faith means creating and welcoming, supportive schools where all children, regardless of their background or beliefs, feel valued and safe. Catholic teaching affirms the dignity of every person as a child of God, and that principle calls us to extend compassion and inclusion to all. At the same time, trustees serve parents and teachers, who need to know their voices matter and that they are supported in their work. By engaging openly with families and educators, we strengthen the Catholic community while showing leadership that respects diversity. Balancing faith and diversity means grounding decisions in the Catholic mission while ensuring policies reflect love, fairness, and care for all, including the most vulnerable. In this way, Catholic education remains both faithful and welcoming, a place where every student can thrive.
Given limited resources and competing priorities, how should Catholic trustees decide between funding faith formation programs (e.g., chaplaincy, retreats, sacramental preparation) and other pressing needs such as classroom supports, technology, or staffing?	Catholic trustees have a responsibility to support both faith and the practical needs of the classroom. I believe the best approach is to view these priorities in complement to each other. Faith programs nurture the spiritual well-being of students, while classroom supports, technology, and staffing ensure they can learn effectively. My approach would be to listen to the parents and teachers, assess where the greatest needs are, and make balanced decisions with their input.
What do you see as the biggest challenge to the long-term sustainability of Catholic education in Alberta? What role should trustees play in ensuring Catholic schools remain distinct, valued, and viable within a pluralistic society?	The biggest challenge to the long-term sustainability of Catholic education in Alberta is maintaining its distinct Catholic identity while demonstrating its value in an increasingly diverse society. Trustees play a crucial role by listening to parents and teachers, advocating for necessary resources, and ensuring that schools remain places of academic excellence rooted in faith, compassion, and inclusion. By upholding our Catholic mission while welcoming all students, trustees help ensure Catholic education remains distinct, respected, and viable for future generations.
Do you support public education in Alberta? What is the role of private education and/or charter schools in Alberta?	Yes, I strongly support public education in Alberta, including publicly funded Catholic schools, because they ensure that every child has access to high-quality learning rooted in community and shared values. I believe that private and charter schools have a place in our province, but without government funding. Public dollars should remain focused on strengthening public and Catholic schools so that resources are equitably available to all families.
As an RDCRS Trustee, how would you advocate for improvements to classroom learning conditions in light of	As trustee, I would advocate tirelessly for improvements to classroom learning conditions by listening closely to parents and teachers, who know firsthand what supports students need most, and by ensuring those voices are represented in funding and policy discussions. Current per-student funding

current per-student funding levels? In your response, please also address the biggest challenges facing publicly funded Catholic education today, how these issues should be addressed, and the role of the Board in resolving them.	levels pose challenges, including larger class sizes, limited access to support, and strains on teachers, all of which directly impact learning. For Catholic education, the biggest challenge is sustaining our distinct identity while ensuring equity and excellence within Alberta’s education system. These issues should be addressed by advocating to the province for fair, stable funding, while prioritizing classroom resources and teacher and student support. The role of the Board is to be a strong, collaborative voice for students, families, and educators, ensuring that decisions reflect both our Catholic mission and the practical needs of classrooms, so that every child has the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and spiritually.
As an RDCRS Trustee, how would you balance the perspectives provided by Senior Administration with other important viewpoints (e.g., teachers, parents, and community members) in your decision-making? In addition, how would you build relationships and work collaboratively with the Alberta Teachers’ Association at both the Local and Provincial levels?	As a Trustee, I would balance the perspective of Senior Administration with those of teachers, parents, and community members by being approachable, listening carefully, and ensuring all voices are considered in decision-making. My work experience has taught me to gather information from multiple perspectives and remain fair and level-headed under pressure, which translates directly into effective governance. Building strong relationships within the Alberta Teachers’ Association, both locally and provincially, is essential. I would approach this through open communication, respect, and a spirit of partnership.
Why should voters pick you in addition to the other qualified candidates?	Voters should choose me because, first and foremost, I am a parent of two children in the Red Deer Catholic school system. Like other parents, I want my kids to learn in an environment where they feel safe, supported, and challenged to reach their full potential. I know what it feels like to want the very best for our children, and that perspective shapes every decision I would make as a trustee. Parents and teachers deserve a trustee who is approachable, who listens carefully, and who brings people together to find solutions. I strongly believe in working alongside families, educators, and parish communities to ensure that our schools reflect both our Catholic values and the practical needs of our classrooms. While my background has prepared me to handle complex decisions and work collaboratively, it is my experience as a parent that keeps me grounded and focused on what matters most: the success and well-being of our students. Voters can count on me to bring both faith and fairness to the board table, always putting students at the centre of every decision.
Are there any other comments / ideas / thoughts that you want to share?	