

Trustee Candidate:Cynthia Leyson

* Candidate profiles are published as submitted.

Who are you, and why are you running to be a trustee in Red Deer Catholic?	Cynthia Leyson I am seeking re-election for the third term, to preserve, promote and protect Catholic Education. I will continue to be the sounding voice for teachers, parents and students. I believe in transparency, advocacy, accountability and autonomy.
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?	Building trust within the school community, open communication, stakeholders engagement, and adhere to the Catholic teaching. RDCRS upholds the theme, All are welcome, all belong. It should start to the trustees who in the governance
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?	My top priority if given a limited resources is the staffing. I starts with classroom supports as well. For the past years I am aware of our financial constraints and it was problematic. The students deserve the best education, teachers should be valued and respected.
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?	Funding is the biggest challenge, I am a trustee for the past eight years and I had the opportunity to represent RDCRS provincially. I will continue to be a strong advocate to protect, preserve, support the Catholic Education. Great things are happening in RDCRS, with limited resources, I am proud to represent our division. Kudos to our staff!!
Do you support public education in Alberta? What is the role of private education and/or charter schools in Alberta?	Yes, I support the public education. Private education involves non government funded schools, families pay the tuition for personalized learning with smaller class sizes, charter schools are publicly funded, they operate with greater autonomy than traditional public schools, non unionized.
As an RDCRS Trustee, how would you advocate for improvements to classroom learning conditions in light of 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.	As a trustee, continue to advocate to have adequate and sustainable resources. We are facing a very challenging and difficult situation and uncertainty right now. In my personal opinion, teachers are not valued and respected provincially, large classroom sizes, and a complex learning environment. The data shows clearly that AB students has the lowest per student funding levels. DON'T stop, we will continue to advocate. Stakeholders engagement is also an effective way to reach out to the parents and our local MLA.
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?	I believe in the collaborative approach (show me the picture) data collection, surveys among our staff, prioritize, highlights then trust to build a strong relationship, in governance I believe in taking the risks and be accountable and transparency is also an important factor in decision making, have an honest and open communication with ATA, (local and provincial level) strong relationships matter most.
Why should voters pick you in addition to the other qualified candidates?	With my eight years as trustee, I visited schools as much as possible, I value my conversations with the staff. I listened with an open heart. And I shared what I learned from that conversation with my fellow trustees. I believe that there are greater things happening outside the four corners of the board room. Trustees are the connector between stakeholders, teachers and the government. For the past two years, I was engaged with casual conversations with staff in the grocery store and malls. I heard concerns and issues and made me a great listener. I valued and respected our educators and support staff. The talking/ listening circle taught me to be a good and effective trustee.
Are there any other comments / ideas / thoughts that you want to share?	Let us move forward together for the success of RDCRS. With God's blessings and guidance we can do it, we are anchored in faith and pilgrims of hope.