

Trustee Candidate: Robert Wiens

* 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 Robert Wiens, I am a loving husband and father. Two of my Children are currently in Red Deer Catholic highway 11 ward schools. One is in middle school the other in elementary, I also had one child graduate from St. Joseph High school in Red Deer. My union background includes Shop steward, Local President, Local Safety Rep, Regional Alternate Vice President, Regional Safety Rep and National Safety Rep for the Union of Safety and Justice Employees, a member of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Over the last 12 years I have watched our class sizes, the need for new teachers, teacher assistants, new schools grow and supports shrink. Talking with my local MLA wasn't working, so I figured I needed to get more involved. I do have a personal stake as my children are not getting the supports they need but I also have close friends that are teachers, parents and support staff. I was also the building manager at a large government facility so I know you can only do so much with the money you receive from other sources and you need to constantly advocate for resources, not everything comes to you when you need it. I want Students, Teachers and the Catholic Schools system to thrive and grow not just now but in the future. I can't do that sitting on my hands and just liking Facebook posts.
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 a Parishioner at Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church we need to be and example of the Catholic faith. The bible tells us " Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing" Hebrews 13:2. As part of the larger community, our schools, teachers, students, parents and trustees interact at multiple diverse levels and I will keep this in mind as I take on this new role.
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?	We are a Catholic School so faith base education is important for our children this includes the sacramental preparation and while retreats do help with personal growth, the focus need to be students first. This includes classroom supports, technology and staffing. First priority will always be how will this help our children the most in a faith base education system.
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?	My role will be one of maintaining and increasing public, church and government support. We need the public and government to support publicly funded Catholic faith based education. We need the Catholic Church to put their weight behind it too. To many places have lost faith base education as a publicly funded option, we need to protect it in Alberta.
Do you support public education in Alberta? What is the role of private education and/or charter schools in Alberta?	Every type of education has a need, I support the need but my priority will always be toward publicly funded Catholic schools. Private Schools have a need to when special interest are not being reflected, but the government funding for this option should not be at 70%.
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 I would work with teachers , the union , other trustee members, the church and parents to convince the government to make our children's education the priority it should be. The biggest challenge is protecting publicly funded Catholic school system as a whole, too many times you hear about people wanting to dismantle publicly funded Catholic schools . I would put my name forward to work with unions, schools, churches and parents and lobby for positive and increased support for the publicly funded Catholic education system.
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?	Teacher are front line and the ATA hopefully will reflect the needs for them and the students. Parents and the community have the students and the faith best interests at heart. Most Senior Administration make their choices based on how much money they have, past practices and the most convincing argument. Then I will walk in with my own views. I will need to balance my approach, look at what makes the most sense and what will at the end of the day is best for the future of our children. Knowing sometimes I might not have everyone's approval. My relationship with the Alberta Teachers' Association will come out of mutual respect once we get a chance to work with each other, after all we all want the best educational system we can provide for our children.

Why should voters pick you in addition to the other qualified candidates?	I have a personal stake because of my children, my future grandchildren and every child that at the end of the day will work in everyone's favour. The students, teachers, parents, government and the union will all gain.
Are there any other comments / ideas / thoughts that you want to share?	With the teachers strike possible just know that myself and my family support what you are trying to (and believe) you will accomplish. Good luck and God Bless.