



Canadian Catholic Schools Trustees' Association NEWSLETTER

December 2025

*"Do not be
afraid...
to you is born
this day in the
city of David
a Saviour, who
is the Christ,
the Lord."
Luke 2: 10-11*



What's Inside?

President and Vice President Message:
PAGE 2

From the Office Desk: PAGE 4

65th Anniversary Highlights: PAGE 6

2026 AGM & Conference: PAGE 8

Provincial Reports: PAGE 9

2025 - 2026 CCSTA Executive & Directors:
PAGE 28

Help Open The Door to Catholic Education **Toonies** *can make a difference*

Each year, there's a significant gap between the amount of funds requested for tuition assistance and actual funds raised. The goal of Toonies for Tuition? To bridge that gap so that no family is left out of a Catholic school in Canada.

Catholic education is a life-changing gift. Consider donating this Christmas to enable more struggling families the chance of attending a Catholic school.

DONATE



HARRY SALM
CCSTA President



GIUSEPPI CALIGIURI
CCSTA Vice President

Advent is coming and God has gifted southern Alberta with six inches of snow three days ago and it is snowing again.

Are we ready, not just for Christmas, **but for the coming of Christ into our lives and into the lives of the students we serve?** As important as we may sometimes see ourselves, we will always be measured by the Catholicity of our schools and the success of our students. As Catholic governors, we must be always attentive to any movements to erode our Constitutional rights, lead as models of Jesus Christ, and ensure our policies create opportunities for evangelization of all our students.

We were elected in June at the AGM as your President and Vice President respectively. A thank you to Teresita Chiarella, for her grace and leadership during her two years as President; Pat Daly, for his wisdom and insight over the past four years as President and Past President; and Ted Paszek, former President of CCSTA, for encouraging me to put my nomination forward for President.

Some of the activities that we, as your President and Vice President, have engaged in over the past five months have included:

- Sending letters to the federal government regarding the two resolutions passed by the membership related to promoting and funding “Canada first” policies and supporting an alternative to the Indigenous language teacher certification process in each province.
- Meeting with my Alberta Member of Parliament, David Bexte, as a new MP, to raise his awareness about CCSTA and Catholic education. I emphasized our Constitutional rights from the 1867 and 1982 Constitutional legislation, provincial inequities for funding for Catholic education, and the home/school/parish connection, or in Mr. Bexte’s words “being raised by a village”.
- Sending a letter to Prime Minister Carney and various ministers in support of Bishop William McGrattan’s letter, as President of CCCB, to the federal government. Collectively, we raised objections to two recommendations in the federal government budget proposal tabled in March 2025. The first recommendation proposed the removal of charitable status for any organization that was anti-abortion and the second was “to provide a definition of a charity which would remove the privileged status of “advancement of religion” as a charitable purpose”. We were pleased to see that neither of these proposed changes to organizations’ charitable status were included in the federal budget.



HARRY SALM
CCSTA President



GIUSEPPI CALIGIURI
CCSTA Vice President

- Meeting on a regular basis with CCSTA’s Executive Director to stay current with ongoing activities that could impact the association.
- Hosting a two-day meeting with the Board of Directors. The first day of this meeting featured a retreat, led by Christopher Smeaton, a former Chief Superintendent with an Alberta Catholic school division. The retreat revolved around creating opportunities for listening and dialogue among the Directors about CCSTA and our Vision to Action Plan. More details will come in the future, as we work through the resulting report from Chris. The second day of our meeting involved reviewing CCSTA’s committee mandates and activities, the Vision to Action Plan, and the association’s communications strategy.
- Attending the Saskatchewan Catholic School Board Association AGM and Convention. They had some very interesting speakers who provided perspectives on our Catholic faith and Indigenous relations. Part of the event included a silent auction to raise funds for Toonies for Tuition. Saskatchewan was rewarded four weeks later by winning the Grey Cup in Winnipeg!
- Attending the Alberta Catholic School Trustee Association AGM and Conference. The convention included presentations about the mission and purpose of Catholic education, truth and reconciliation, and the Constitutional rights of Catholic schools. Part of this event also included a silent auction to raise funds for Toonies for Tuition. Later, during the banquet, I was humbled to be awarded a Life Membership in ACSTA.

We have had many conversations, both at the Executive level and at the Board of Directors table, about the ongoing concerns regarding trusteeship in Ontario. Please be assured that we pray regularly for all Ontario trustees and their school divisions and offer our support during these very troubling times.

Harry Salm
President

Giuseppi Caligiuri
Vice President





FROM THE OFFICE DESK

ROSE BURTON SPOHN

CCSTA Executive Director

It's amazing what you can uncover when you start digging. Grainy images from photocopied newspaper articles, smiling faces from formal portraits taken decades ago, detailed stories of how this organization came to be. This has been our experience this year, as we sought to celebrate and relearn the rich history of CCSTA.

We have uncovered stories of fortitude and faith-filled commitment that would make the most courageous among us take pause. Take the amazing milestones shared at our 65th anniversary webinar on November 5th, or these moments in history as examples:



Reverend Clement Kindervater, OMI, Executive Director of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association in the late **1950s**, was asked to travel across Canada to generate support for the formation of a national Catholic trustee association. Fourteen Catholic trustees in attendance at a meeting in Victoria each contributed \$20 of their own money – the equivalent of approximately \$211 in today's funds – to support Fr. Kindervater in making his cross-country journey. On September 19, 1960, the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association was formed.



During the **1970s**, CCSTA urged government support for funding for independent schools. In 1978, British Columbia enacted The Independent Schools Support Act, which provided some funding for non-public schools in that province. Although CCSTA petitioned the Manitoba government to provide funding for independent schools in 1978, it was not until the 1990s that the agreement was finalized and the independent schools in Manitoba received 50% funding for their operating costs. This level of funding still exists today.



In **1985**, under the leadership of Premier Bill Davis, and thanks to the advocacy of many devoted Catholic leaders, trustees, clergy, parishioners, and families, Bill 30 passed in Ontario. This bill granted full funding to all English and French Catholic schools for Grades 11, 12, and OAC. Although some argued that Bill 30 was discriminatory because it provided benefits only to one religious group, both the Ontario Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada disagreed; they declared that the bill was constitutional.



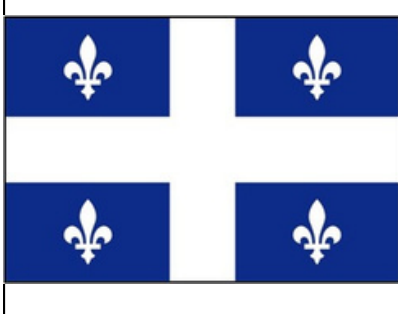


FROM THE OFFICE DESK (CONTINUED)

ROSE BURTON SPOHN
CCSTA Executive Director



In **1995**, in the face of a referendum related to educational reform in Newfoundland, CCSTA mobilized provincial associations and Catholic organizations to engage in local political lobbying. CCSTA, meanwhile, attempted to meet with national politicians.



In **1997**, a similar story unfolded in Quebec. Despite CCSTA's best efforts to prevent the Quebec government from changing the funding of its schools, ultimately, in the 1990s, government support for Catholic education in both Quebec and Newfoundland ceased to exist. However, by 2000, the Roman Catholic Independent Schools Association (RCISA) had formed; it still operates today.



In **2005**, a legal case of great significance emerged in Theodore, Saskatchewan. Focused on whether non-Catholic students should be permitted to attend Catholic schools, and whether Catholic schools educating non-Catholic students should receive government funding to do so, the Theodore Case took over a decade to resolve. In 2021, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that all parents in Saskatchewan have the right to choose Catholic education, and that funding should follow accordingly.



In **2006**, the CCSTA Endowment Fund became a reality. Fondly known now as Toonies for Tuition, this endowment fund was the brainchild of CCSTA's President, Gerald Bernakevitch. Since its inception approximately two decades ago, Toonies for Tuition has raised over \$1 million for families who face financial challenges in paying tuition fees for their children to attend Catholic elementary and secondary schools in provinces where there is no or partial government funding.

Such memories remind us that Catholic education in Canada ought never to be taken for granted, and they remind us that, on our journey through whatever difficult times might lie ahead, we stand on the shoulders of faith-filled giants. Thank you for all you do every day to ensure Catholic education remains vibrant and strong for future generations. I wish you all a blessed Advent, a wondrous Christmas, and a peace-filled 2026.

Rose





65th Anniversary

Thank you to everyone who celebrated this special milestone year with us. It was truly a privilege to commemorate the presence of CCSTA throughout the decades and look to the future with unified hope.



June

We gathered with members from across Canada in beautiful Halifax, NS for our 2025 AGM & Conference.

We shared in the worldwide celebration of the Jubilee of Hope and enjoyed unforgettable keynotes and presentations and the opportunity to connect and pray together.

[Read More Here](#)



October

Our Board of Directors and Staff met in Leduc, AB this fall for a retreat and board meetings.

Guided by Christopher Smeaton, we reflected on our vision and mission and discerned together how God is continuing to use and call CCSTA to serve the mission of Canadian Catholic education.



November

Trustees, educators, and friends of Catholic education joined from their homes to celebrate 65 years of CCSTA. Though participants represented dozens of Catholic schools and school boards from coast to coast, the focus of the evening was our one, shared mission of Canadian Catholic education.

[Read More Here](#)

2025: CCSTA's 65th Anniversary



We pray that, for generations to come, students and families will be blessed by the work of Canadian Catholic education.

May God continue to bless the efforts of CCSTA in promoting and protecting the mission of Catholic education.



Word of Encouragement from Ed Brisbois, CCSTA President, 1960

"Perhaps the least we may do - and perhaps it is the most - is to use our skills, our talents and our resources to create a climate and a channel for the Redemptive Love of Christ to reach all educators and all education."

"Then, perhaps in the twilight of our lives, we may say with the soldier poet, 'Lord, I tried to return this millionth of Thy gift.'"





2026 AGM & CONFERENCE

2026 AGM & Conference Organizing Committee

Mark your calendars for June 4-6, 2026, as Manitoba Catholic Schools proudly hosts the Canadian Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (CCSTA) Annual General Meeting and Convention at the Radisson Hotel in Winnipeg, MB.

This year's theme, "We Are All One in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), invites trustees, educators, and Catholic leaders from across Canada to unite in faith and purpose. The convention promises inspiring sessions, collaborative networking, and spiritual renewal as we work together to strengthen Catholic education nationwide.



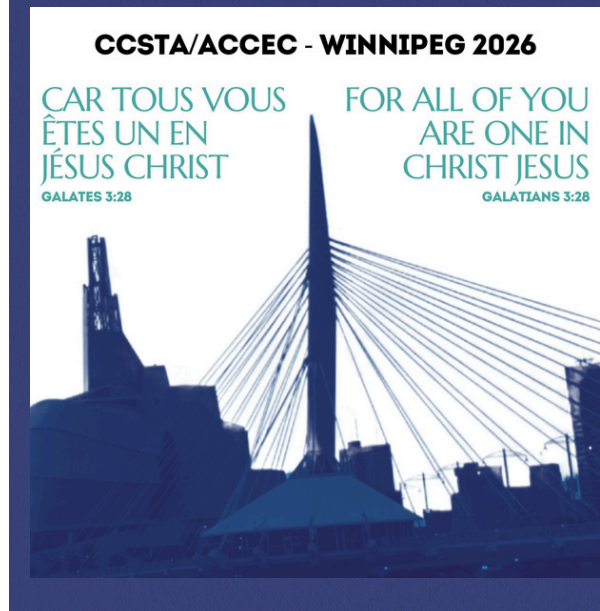
A highlight of the event will be our keynote speaker and musician, Steve Angrisano, an internationally recognized Catholic composer and storyteller. Known for his dynamic blend of music, humor, and heartfelt witness, Steve has inspired audiences at World Youth Day, national conferences, and parish missions around the globe. His message will challenge and encourage us to live our mission boldly, rooted in Christ and committed to the future of Catholic education.

Beyond the sessions, Winnipeg offers a wealth of experiences for visitors. Explore The Forks, a historic meeting place turned vibrant market with local artisans, diverse cuisine, and scenic riverwalks. Immerse yourself in history and human dignity at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, or enjoy the natural beauty of Assiniboine Park and Zoo, home to the stunning Leaf Conservatory and even polar bears. For art lovers, the Winnipeg Art Gallery + Qaumajuq showcases world-class collections, including the largest public display of Inuit art in the world.

Whether you're strolling through the charming Exchange District, relaxing at Thermëa Spa, or sampling local flavours at one of Winnipeg's acclaimed restaurants, your time outside the convention will be just as enriching.



Join us this June for a weekend of faith, fellowship, and unforgettable experiences. Registration opens in January 2026—don't miss this opportunity to be part of a national celebration of Catholic education!





CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 2025

Catholic education across British Columbia continues to flourish with renewed purpose, strengthened identity, and an expanding commitment to excellence. Drawing from diocesan and archdiocesan reports across CISVA, CISND, ICS, CISKD, and CISPG, this month's update highlights shared mission achievements, academic and faith-formation priorities, enrolment growth, and the three province-wide challenges shaping the path **forward**.

A Province Rooted in Mission and Renewal

Across all jurisdictions, Catholic identity continues to animate school life:

- **CISVA** remains focused on evangelizing school communities through system-wide faith formation—including Faith Development Day, Foundations of the Faith, and Reverence for Life.
- **CISND** lived a Jubilee Year of Hope marked by retreats, pilgrimages, liturgies, and a mission of encounter rooted in the Gospel and the land.
- **ICS** integrated synodal listening and expanded teacher formation while carrying forward the legacy of the Sisters of St. Ann.
- **CISPG** advanced its strategic anchor of Bold, Intentional Faith Formation through sacramental preparation, Co-Missioning gatherings, and shared prayer initiatives.
- **CISKD** strengthened parish–school relationships and youth evangelization through major diocesan formation experiences with Fr. Leo Patalinghug.

Across B.C., Catholic schools remain places where faith, culture, and life meet in harmony, forming young people rooted in Christ and ready to serve.

Enrolment Growth and Confidence in Catholic Schools

All five systems report sustained or significant growth:

- **CISVA** – 14,088 students (16,688 including affiliated schools)
- **CISND** – 1,380 students, a 14% increase since 2020
- **ICS** – 1,600 students (+5% this year)
- **CISPG** – 1,621 students across northern B.C.
- **CISKD** – enrolment at its strongest level in seven years

Families continue to seek schools where academic excellence and Gospel formation coexist.

Educational Excellence and Professional Learning

Catholic districts continue to invest deeply in teacher development, leadership pathways, and instructional quality.

Learning and Literacy

CISND's Structured Literacy Initiative continues to drive measurable system-wide gains, with over 80% of Tier 2 students returning to the average range by mid-year—now recognized nationally and internationally.

Leadership Development

CISVA's professional learning plan, CISPG's expanded Learning Services Team, ICS's addition of new vice-principals, and CISKD's digital HR and finance transformation all support long-term leadership stability and mission alignment.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment remains a core focus in all dioceses, with CISVA executing significant global outreach (170 university networks), CISPG expanding practicum and international recruitment pathways, and ICS and CISKD stabilizing new staff but facing ongoing shortages in early learning and specialized roles.

Governance, Finance, and Stewardship

Systems continue to strengthen oversight, long-term planning, and financial sustainability:

- **CISVA** advanced significant accessibility and infrastructure upgrades.
- **CISND** modernized governance and financial policies and expanded district principal roles.
- **ICS** launched a diocesan strategic plan and expanded early learning capacity.
- **CISPG** maintained a centralized administrative support model serving 200+ staff across six communities.
- **CISKD** achieved a financial turnaround at Sacred Heart through community mobilization and strategic budgeting.

Top Three Shared Challenges Across British Columbia

Across all dioceses, three common challenges consistently shape the landscape:

1. Recruitment and Retention of Catholic Educators

Securing qualified Catholic teachers, EAs, and early-learning staff remains the single most urgent need across the province—affecting both large urban systems and rural northern communities.

2. Increasing Complexity in Student Needs

Demand for inclusive education, early learning support, mental health resources, cultural responsiveness, and specialized interventions continues to grow faster than available staffing and funding.

3. Financial Pressures and Sustainability

Rising wages, tuition sensitivity, expanding capital needs, and declining parish subsidies create pressures on long-term sustainability, particularly in small communities and aging facilities.

These challenges are shared across all five dioceses, reinforcing the value of provincial cooperation, shared strategies, and unified advocacy.

Looking Ahead: A Unified Vision for 2026

Despite shared challenges, the dioceses of British Columbia express a strong, unified sense of mission and hope for the coming year. Priorities include:

- Strengthening recruitment and formation of Catholic educators
- Enhancing early learning and inclusive education supports
- Deepening evangelization through catechesis, sacramental life, and Catholic worldview
- Advancing literacy and assessment systems across K–12
- Strengthening long-term financial planning and infrastructure renewal
- Expanding parish–school partnerships at the heart of Catholic identity

Closing

Across mountains, coastlines, cities, and northern communities, the story of Catholic education in British Columbia is one of resilience, collaboration, and grace. Grounded in the Gospel and driven by mission, our schools continue to accompany young people toward truth, holiness, and service. As we look toward 2026, we do so as one provincial community who are committed to excellence, united in faith, and confident that the Holy Spirit is guiding our shared work.

Events

2025 AGM and Trustee Orientation

On November 14, our 2025 AGM opened with a powerful keynote from Fr. Kris Schmidt on Christ-centred leadership. It continued with exceptional presentations from Fr. Cristino Bouvette on truth and reconciliation, Justice Ana Loparco on Catholic education in constitutional law, and Dr. Dwayne Zarichny on strengthening governance. Delegates celebrated outstanding contributors to Catholic education at our Awards Banquet, and the weekend concluded with a beautiful Commissioning Mass where trustees committed their mission to Christ.



During the business meeting, Kelly Whalen was re-elected as ACSTA President and Andrew Gustafson was elected Vice President! A warm congratulations to both, and please keep them in your prayers.



Earlier in the week, our Trustee Orientation offered focused formation on Christ-centred governance, featuring presentations from Brendan Cavanagh, Michael Hauptman, Fr. Philip Creurer, and Stacy McNeil-Ayeh. We look forward to the year ahead under our renewed leadership as we continue advancing the mission of Catholic education.



September and November 2025 Board Meetings

On September 11-12, we held our September Board of Directors' meeting in Leduc, where we took time to celebrate several of our directors who are retiring from their positions as trustees. Another highlight, of course, was Bishop McGratton - our Catholic education liaison Bishop - taking a turn with babysitting duties!

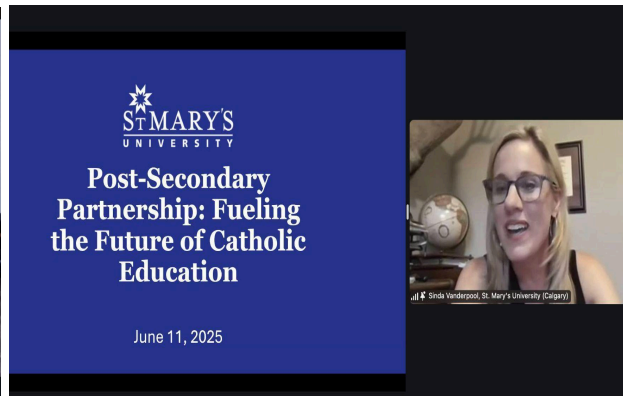


On November 14, we hosted our last board meeting for the 2024/2025 ACSTA term. We are so glad to be joined by our incoming directors from the recent Alberta municipal election, and we're grateful for such a vibrant term.



Catholic Ed Talks

ACSTA continues to advance its professional development series, *Catholic Ed Talks*, bringing insightful discussions to Catholic education leaders. Recent events featured distinguished speakers, including Stacey Macneil-Ayeh on *Pastoral Approaches to Sensitive Topics* (May 2025); Dr. Sinda Vanderpool, President of St. Mary's University, on *Post-Secondary Partnerships: Fueling the Future of Catholic Education* (June 2025); and Fr. Stefano Penna from the Archdiocese of Saskatoon, Chaplain of CCSTA, who presented *Verso l'Alto*, a talk on the newly canonized St. Carlo Acutis (September 2025).



Grand Opening of St. Carlo Acutis High School



On September 24th, we were honored to attend the grand opening of St. Carlo Acutis Catholic School in Camrose, with our Executive Director Brendan Cavanaugh, our President, Kelly Whalen, and our Vice President, Andrew Gustafson. Congratulations to Elk Island Catholic School on the opening of this new school!

Alberta Speech from the Throne

On October 23, we were honored to attend the Speech from the Throne for the opening of the second session of the 31st Alberta legislature. Thank you to Minister Dan Williams for the invitation to join!

Our President, Kelly Whalen, and Executive Director, Brendan Cavanagh, had a wonderful time connecting with colleagues from our provincial government and having meaningful conversations about working with our government to strengthen publicly-funded Catholic education throughout this next period of governance.



ACSTA Advocacy

ACSTA has been actively advocating to protect the rights and interests of Catholic schools, ensuring strong governance, funding, and curriculum protections. Recent efforts have secured recognition of separate school rights, maintained key funding mechanisms, and added reference to the constitutional protections on denominational separate schools to the social studies curriculum. ACSTA also supported trustee readiness for the municipal election and continues assisting Catholic education partners in navigating political and legal challenges.



SASKATCHEWAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

CCSTA REPORT

December 2025

Teacher Formation:

As previously reported, with the new teachers contract more teachers needed to be hired to deal with classroom complexity. For Catholic school divisions who already have difficulty hiring Catholic teachers, this has created a challenge. The Education Committee of the SCSBA, made up of Directors of Education from the 8 Catholic School divisions, have started a process of gathering processes for education of non-Catholic teachers and formation for Catholic teachers with a view to share best practices and to possibly develop a provincial model for new and seasoned teacher formation.

Communications:

Good News stories are still being posted to the SCSBA website and are being tweeted out to increase exposure of the stories and to drive some traffic to the website. More detailed Good News Articles together with a "Hero Image" will also be posted on the SCSBA website, and these will also be forwarded to the CCSTA for posting on the CCSTA website.

A subcommittee has been formed to study the SCSBA website and provide recommendations for improvements. Changes have already been made and more will be changed now that the subcommittee has had a chance to meet and discuss purpose and priorities.

The Government of Saskatchewan again proclaimed Catholic Education Week for May 25 - June 1, 2025. We are grateful for the support we receive from the Government of Saskatchewan for Catholic Education. It is expected that another application will be made for Catholic Education Week in 2026 which will take place May 10-17.

Advocacy:

At the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) 2024 Fall Assembly a bylaw amendment resolution to add another public section member to the SSBA Executive was opposed by the SCSBA (also known as the Catholic Section of the SSBA or Catholic Constituency). Ultimately, the bylaw amendment resolution was unable to garner 2/3rds support to pass. The proposed bylaw amendment was defeated once before in 2018 and was opposed then, as now, because it is fundamentally unfair, giving public boards an inordinate influence on the SSBA Executive. Public boards brought forward the same bylaw amendment resolution at the 2025 Fall Assembly. Catholic divisions prepared a counter resolution that would be fairer than the public board proposal. As it turns out, both bylaw amendment resolutions failed to garner 2/3rds support.

A meeting with the Education Minister has been requested, but has not yet occurred. One of the concerns is the August 2023 ministerial directive which still prevents third party providers of

sexual education in the classroom. Groups such as Teen Aid are still not allowed in the classroom.

Faith Development:

The Catholic Education Coordinators/Consultants Association of Saskatchewan (CECAS) is continuing to review the Blessed and Beloved replacement for Fully Alive to determine how the resource will fit with the Saskatchewan curriculum. It will likely be the fall of 2026 before Catholic divisions will be able to make use of the resource.

2024 SCSBA Convention (2025):

A very successful convention and awards banquet were held on May 9-10, 2025, hosted by Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools. At the Awards Banquet, Gwen Keith, until recently the Director of Education for Holy Family Catholic Schools, was awarded the Julian Paslawski Meritorious Service Award. Deanna Pellatt from Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools received an Appreciation Award.

2025 SCSBA AGM and Convention:

An equally successful 2025 SCSBA AGM and Convention was hosted by Holy Trinity Roman Catholic School Division October 17-19, 2025, in Moose Jaw, SK. The theme was "Let us be Lights of Hope". At the Awards Banquet, Sean Chase, until recently the Director of Education for Regina Catholic Schools, was awarded the Julian Paslawski Meritorious Service Award. Monsignor Maurice Fiolleau from Prince Albert, Deacon Joe Lang from Regina Catholic Schools and Lyndon Linklater nominated by Holy Trinity Catholic Schools received Appreciation Awards.

Indigenous Leadership Team:

In our ongoing efforts to address calls to action under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the 8 Catholic School Divisions created a group called the Indigenous Leadership Team made up of division representatives for indigenous education. The team completed work on their third video/social media project for Catholic Education Week in 2025. Once again, the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus Charitable Foundation provided financial support for this project. A fourth video/social media project is being planned for Catholic Education Week in 2026.

Saskatchewan Congress:

The SCSBA has been supportive of an initiative from Saskatchewan Catholic Connections to host a Saskatchewan Congress. This has been talked about for several years and now appears to be in consideration for the fall of 2027. Catholic school divisions have been needing a faith development opportunity for teachers and staff for some time. Consideration was given to a faith development opportunity to be held in conjunction with the 2026 SCSBA AGM & Convention, but that did not come to fruition.

Court Case Challenging Government Consent Policy

The Saskatchewan Court of Appeal ruled that the UR Pride case would be allowed to proceed. The Supreme Court of Canada will hear an appeal by the Government of Saskatchewan from that ruling.



September 2025 Report to the Canadian Catholic Schools Trustees Association

Funding

Manitoba Catholic Schools are funded differently than Catholic schools in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Our schools are funded as independent schools. Our current Fair Funding Agreement was negotiated with the Filmon Government in 1996. The support grant amount is based on a formula that gives us 50% of the actual per pupil costs in public divisions with a two-year gap in funding amounts. In the 2025/26 school year, our provincial support grant will be \$6,837 per full time student which represents 50% of the cost of educating our students if they were in public divisions in 2023/24. This is a 1.7% increase. We also receive a textbook grant of \$60 per student and full funding for Level II and III special needs students on a case-by-case basis.

The province also provides public school divisions grants to provide independent schools with clinical support services and shops programing through shared service agreements. Public school divisions are not required to enter into these agreements. The River East Transcona and the Winnipeg School Divisions have stopped offering shared services to our schools. We are still receiving services from Louis Riel and Seven Oaks School Divisions. After much dialogue, the Minister of Education, Tracy Schmidt has approved that the provincial funds for clinician services can be given directly to our schools to purchase these services privately. Clinical support services offer students, families, and educators specialized interventions and support geared to success in literacy, numeracy, communications, along with mental health and wellbeing. This includes the following disciplines: Social Work, Psychology, Speech and Language, and Reading.

Enrolment

Our enrolment looks very strong this year. We are waiting for October 1st to confirm numbers which is the date set by the Department of Education to base our funding. Most schools will be at capacity. Some of our schools have waiting lists as we are unable to accept all the students who apply. We do not receive capital funding from the province and additions are financed through fundraising and mortgages covered through operational budgets. Increased enrolment is an important factor in business plans that are developed to get approval for new construction. Schools work with their respective Archdiocese on all capital projects. Parochial school buildings are owned directly by parishes or the archdiocese but operated by separate school corporations. The Administration of Parochial School Assets Policy was developed several years ago to clarify the financial relationship between schools and parishes who all share facilities. Our Role of the Pastor Policy also helps defines the responsibilities of the Pastor in the operation of the school where he plays a vital role in maintaining the Catholicity and administration of temporal goods according to Canon Law. The Pastor is a member of the Board of Directors of each school.

Curriculum

The Province of Manitoba is developing and piloting new curriculum over the next few years including ELA, Science, Social Studies, Math and Financial Literacy, Literacy and Information Technology, and Applied Technology. The new Physical Education and Health curriculum including the sections on sexuality which was to be released this year is no longer included in the list of changes. Manitoba Catholic Schools are required to teach the provincial curriculum as part of our funding agreement and corresponding legislation. In our funding agreement, as independent schools we are allowed to teach curriculum with a faith perspective.

The focus of MCS this year is AI as we support our teachers and students through professional development and policy to embrace the opportunities and challenges that AI offers.

CCSTA Winnipeg 2026

The host committee is busy planning an exciting convention in Winnipeg next June. We are known for our hospitality in Friendly Manitoba. A great program is being planned based on our theme *We are all one in Christ Jesus* that includes Steve Angrisano, Archbishop Murray Chaitlain, and Archbishop Albert LeGatt. We have strong workshop presentations in both English and French.

There will be great food, beverages, and entertainment that highlights the best that Manitoba has to offer and our diverse Catholic school communities. Schools will be participating in variety of ways as we will come together to welcome you to Winnipeg.

Robert Praznik
Superintendent
Manitoba Catholic Schools



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

OCSTA December 2025 Report to CCSTA

Passage of Bill 33, *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025*

Bill 33, *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025* became law in Ontario on November 20, 2025. The legislation introduces several changes to the Education Act and Child Welfare Laws. It also provides increased authority to the Minister of Education including greater flexibility with regard to placing a school board under Government supervision.

While this was not the outcome the Association had hoped for, we were inspired by the shared resolve and unity of purpose displayed by Catholic School Trustees and others in the Catholic community. Such unity will continue to be necessary as we work together to positively influence regulations flowing from Bill 33 as well as the potential for change to the structure of education governance in Ontario.

On November 27th, *Ontario Regulation 263/25 Transition of Boards Under Review or Supervision* was filed and came into force.

The regulation:

- Deals with the transition of school boards that are currently under review and/or supervision
- Addresses how existing reviews or directions under previous regulations are to be handled under this new framework; and
- Moves the review of the Near North District School Board to “be an investigation under section 230.1 **about matters of public interest**, and for the purposes of an investigation.”

We anticipate that in the near future, regulations and/or Policy Program Memoranda (PPM's) concerning the following matters will be released:

- School Resource Officers/Police Program
- Naming of schools; and

- Discretionary spending by school boards.

Promoting Catholic Identity

† Our Catholic Identity Series (Posters)

Please note, this poster series are available for schools to purchase.

Through the vision of the Director of Catholic Education, Anne O'Brien, a number of OCSTA resources have been developed and released that serve to promote the Catholic identity of publicly funded Catholic education including the monthly Pilgrims of Hope: On the Path to Holiness Bulletins and Catholic Identity series posters. More details are on the [OCSTA website](https://www.ocsta.ca/).



CATHOLIC EDUCATION: TOGETHER IN FAITH

Catholic Virtual Ontario

The recently held Annual Catholic Virtual Ontario Forum and when Faith Meets Pedagogy Student Day were both a tremendous success and served to raise/promote the profile of OCSTA.

These events and the creation of over 130 distinctly Catholic secondary school online learning courses have made a significant contribution to Catholic education in our province.

FACE Lobby Day for Catholic Education at Queen's Park

The Catholic education joint partnership initiative between OCSTA, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) called "FACE" (Friends and Advocates for Catholic Education) recently hosted the 2025 Catholic Education Lobby Day at Queen's



Park. The event involved multiple meetings of Catholic Trustees, Teachers and Bishops with Cabinet Ministers, MPPs and/or their staff throughout the day.

We are grateful for the participation of the following OCSTA Board members and staff who participated in the 2025 FACE Lobby Day meetings at Queen's Park and contributed to the success of this year's event:

Michael Bellmore (OCSTA President)	Patrick Daly (Executive Director)
Mark Mullan	Sharon McMillan (Director of Communications)
Janet O'Hearn-Czarnota	Anne O'Brien (Director of Catholic Education)
Morgan Ste. Marie	
Jennifer Wigston	

OCSTA Catholic Leadership Speaker Series

The OCSTA Catholic Leadership Speaker Series events held over the past few months were well received and much appreciated by the OCSTA membership and guests in attendance. The season's opening session on the history and significance of Catholic Trustees in Ontario delivered by Dr. Mark McGowan and the recent presentation on Catholic Trustee Well-Being delivered by OCSTA Chaplain Fr. Jim Mockler and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB Sr. Manager of Pastoral Services, Kelly Lazure-Valconie, were timely and inspiring.

Upcoming Events:



OCSTA Catholic Trustees Seminar
January 16 – 17, 2026
Delta by Marriott Toronto Airport Hotel
[Registration and Program Information](#)



OCSTA 96th Annual General Meeting and Conference
April 30 – May 2, 2026
Windsor Convention Centre
[Registration and Program Information](#)

Organizational Capacity

The months of October and November were marked by a series of important activities and events for our Franco-Ontarian community. As we begin a new school year, we enthusiastically celebrated our francophone identity while remaining attentive to the political issues that directly affect the French-language Catholic education system in Ontario.

Participation in the 35th FNCSF Conference – Kelowna (B.C.), October 16 to 18, 2025

The AFOCSC had the honour of sponsoring the 35th conference of the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF), held in Kelowna, British Columbia, from October 16 to 18, 2025. The welcome was especially warm, and this participation strengthened our ties with the FNCSF as well as with our partner school boards.

CACE Conference – Regina (SK), October 16 to 18, 2025

The CACE Conference, held from October 16 to 18, 2025 in Regina, Saskatchewan, brought together communications professionals working within francophone education organizations across Canada. This event provided an opportunity to exchange best practices, innovative communication strategies, and shared challenges related to promoting francophone education.

AFO Annual Celebration – Toronto, October 22 to 25, 2025

From October 22 to 25, 2025, we took part in the Annual Celebration of the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO). This event offered a wonderful opportunity for meetings and networking among members of our educational community, our institutional partners, and francophone organizations. The presence and partnership of the AFOCSC were noted, demonstrating our commitment to remain an active stakeholder in the Franco-Ontarian community sector.

First Francophone Summit on Finance and Investment – Toronto, October 28 to 29, 2025

The AFOCSC was also proud to sponsor the first Francophone Summit on Finance and Investment, organized by the Canadian Club of Toronto on October 28 and 29, 2025. This summit addressed major economic issues affecting the francophone community, including business growth, economic succession, and the financing of francophone institutions.

Student Senate



The AFOCSC Student Senate is beginning a new year marked by renewal and engagement with the election of its new executive. Under the leadership of Olivier Gagnon Maheu, Prime Minister, supported by Sasha Banka, Deputy Prime Minister, and Jonathan Lee How Cheong, Secretary, the Senate brings together a passionate and determined team dedicated to representing students from Ontario's French-language Catholic school boards. Together, these young leaders aim to unite their voices to advance the Senate's priorities and strengthen the presence of Francophonie and the Catholic faith in schools. The next Senate meeting will take place on November 12, marking the official start of this new collaborative mandate.

Political Affairs

Current political situation

The political landscape in Ontario's education sector is shaped by two major developments: the definitive coming into force of Bill 33 on the one hand; and on the other, the Minister of Education's announcement of the establishment of new Student and Family Assistance Offices.

With respect to Bill 33, it was definitively passed on November 19, 2025 and received Royal Assent on November 20, 2025. With Royal Assent, it is now fully in force and applicable, subject

to certain provisions whose implementation depends on an order-in-council of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It is therefore no longer a bill. It is now a law called the *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025* (*Loi de 2025 sur le soutien aux enfants, aux*

élèves et aux étudiants). The application of this law will have an impact on French-language Catholic school boards. We will have to adapt to it and minimize its effects through more rigorous and transparent governance of our school boards in the best interests of students.

Regarding the new Student and Family Assistance Offices announced by the Minister on November 13, 2025, the AFOCSC issued a public statement indicating its willingness to learn more about the roles, competencies, operating and funding mechanisms of these new offices. While awaiting these answers, it already appears that these offices are part of a broader school board governance reform project that could ultimately lead to the elimination of the role of school trustees. It is important to remain vigilant and ready to use all legal means to defend the right to autonomous governance of French-language Catholic school boards, a right recognized by the Constitution and confirmed by Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence.

Advocacy activities

Alongside these two developments, the AFOCSC's 2026 political advocacy plan has been developed. Preparations are also underway for the political advocacy day on February 25, 2026. Invitation letters have been sent to eight Members of Provincial Parliament as well as to the Honourable Edith Dumont. Considering the major changes underway in the education sector, a request for a meeting with the Minister of Education has been submitted by the AFOCSC Executive Council. We remain attentive to his response.

AFOCSC Conference – May 2026 in Toronto

The AFOCSC's major celebration will take place during our Annual Conference on May 21 and 22, 2026 in Toronto. This event will bring together representatives of school boards, community partners, and members of the French-language Catholic school Francophonie to celebrate our achievements, strengthen our ties, and highlight the vitality of our network. This moment will also provide a privileged opportunity to reflect collectively on upcoming challenges, share inspiring practices, and reaffirm the AFOCSC's commitment to defending and promoting French-language Catholic education in Ontario.

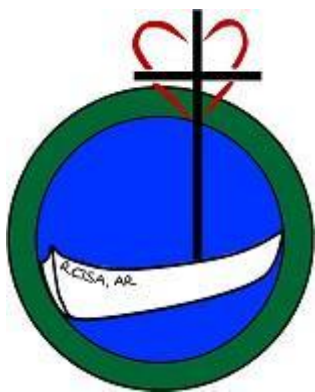
Melinda Chartrand

Board Member of AFOCSC
Representative to ACCEC/CCSTA

Mirela Lonian

Executive Director of AFOCSC

The Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC) is the voice of Ontario's eight French-language Catholic school boards and the Consortium Centre Jules-Léger, serving more than 79,200 Franco-Ontarian students across the province. Our school boards employ over 11,000 teachers and support staff who work diligently in nearly 300 schools to provide the highest quality French-language Catholic education possible.



Roman Catholic Independent Schools Association - Atlantic Region

2A Bonaventure Ave. St. John's, NL, A1C -6B3

RCISA-AR October Report 2025

Sacred Heart School Halifax

The anticipation of a new school year brought great joy because there is so much promise that lies ahead, not just for our students, but for all those in our Sacred Heart community who cherish our shared experience. For our 177th school year, we had a lovely school opening at Sacred Heart School of Halifax.



Our community is rooted in a clear Mission, and our **five Goals** direct all we do as they relate to faith, academics, service, community, and personal growth. I'm happy to share this year's theme: **Choosing love, compassion, and hope for our world**. It is appropriate for this era of challenge, conflict, and disillusionment because it speaks to our philosophy of a Sacred Heart education, which continually strives to live rooted in a spirit of generosity and joy. As we invite each other to choose hope over despair and love over division, we make the love of God known in the world. Our Sacred Heart education is transformational, and as we live this theme, we create a compassionate community of hope.

We are a community rooted in spirituality and love, and with a unique and special Mission that unites us.

New for 2025-26:

- New: Full school diamond model of education which now sees co-ed education in Grades JP-6 and Grades 10-12, while Grades 7-9 remain single-gender. This change was instituted for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was an improved student experience and the ability to retain more of our Grade 9 into 10 students. The early 2025-26 numbers have proven positive, with a highest-ever retention rate at this level.
- New: We believe that education goes beyond the traditional classroom and that learning is so much more than academics. To reinforce this belief, we will begin offering a robust Enrichment Program in our Elementary School in the 2025-26 School Year.
- Enrolment 486



St. Bonaventure's College



Staff Formation

On August 27th, Jarrod Stadnyk, a teacher at St. Paul's in Winnipeg led a staff retreat on Ignatian Spirituality.

We celebrated our opening mass with record attendance from parents and our school community.

We created the first ever slot for all grade 12 students to discuss post-secondary secondary university options. With the new implementations of common exams, the Department of Education directed us to have our Mid-term and final exams in alignment with NL Schools. In partnership with our math department, we will be offering the Waterloo Math competitions from Grades 6-12 to any students interested in competing in them. We continue to focus our attention on our Religion Program and purchased Kids in the Know, a child protection course for Grades K-12.



Maria Conkey has been hired as the new choral director for Grades 7-12.

Laura Seviour has been hired as an Academic Support Teacher for Grades 7-12.

We had part of our roof in Mullock Hall replaced and will replace the rest in the spring. More repairs will be starting in the spring after securing funding through our capital campaign.

We have started planning our Toonies for Tuition Day for November.

St. Bonaventure's College students attended a moving ceremony at the Heart Garden at Government House in honour of Truth and Reconciliation Day. The event featured drumming, powerful speakers, and a visit to the Patty Boy's Exhibit made up of student artwork inspired by the life of Mi'kmaw police officer Patrick Gehue. Our students placed paper hearts with messages in the garden as part of the ceremony.

On September 27th, St. Bon's hosted the Jesuit Schools Network of North America for a mass with staff and the JSN Board and a reception followed. It is the first time that the Jesuit School's Network held meetings in Canada. The JSN govern all Jesuit Catholic schools in North America.



Enrolment: 280



Immaculate Heart of Mary

We are celebrating our 26th anniversary this year which we plan to celebrate in conjunction with the grand opening of our ' new gymnasium'. Our school population is healthy with a population of 204 students.



We started a gym floor project a year ago to replace the gym floor. This meant we had to tear out all the walls to find out where our leaks were coming from in all areas of the gymnasium. It has been a massive, exciting project. We are hoping our gym will open at the end of October.

Our cross-country running team is up and running. Our Grade 6-9 are looking forward to the Provincial intermediate Skills Competition in November and are in the process of choosing the category in which they will compete.

Other renovations have happened both inside and outside the school. Our Music and Band Programs are very busy along with all aspects of school life.

We have not had any change over in teaching staff. We are so very blessed.



New to the RCISA network is Frassati Academy, a new independent, classically-inspired Catholic elementary school in Halifax. They are 35 students strong and poised for stability and growth into 2026, thanks be to God.

2026 AGM & Conference Winnipeg, MB | June 4-6, 2026

CCSTA/ACCEC - WINNIPEG 2026

CAR TOUS VOUS
ÊTES UN EN
JÉSUS CHRIST
GALATES 3:28

FOR ALL OF YOU
ARE ONE IN
CHRIST JESUS
GALATIANS 3:28



Registration for our 2026 AGM & Conference will be open by the end of January 2026. Join us for three days of celebrating the gift of Catholic education and connecting with Canadian Catholic school trustees and administrators in Winnipeg, MB! See you there!

Connect with us!



communications@ccsta.ca



2025 -2026 Executive:

HARRY SALM - President

GIUSEPPI CALIGIURI - Vice President

TERESITA CHIARELLA - Past President

FR. STEFANO PENNA - Chaplain

ROSE BURTON SPOHN - Executive Director

2025 -2026 Directors:

British Columbia: **Mike Doyle**

Alberta/NWT/Yukon: **Kelly Whalen**

Saskatchewan: **Bruno Tuchscherer**

Manitoba: **Tammy Narynski**

Ontario French: **Melinda Chartrand**

Ontario English: **Mark Mullan**

Ontario English: **Bev Eckensweiler**

Atlantic Region: **Annette Mallay**

*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*
from CCSTA

