



FAIR Ottawa survey of school board trustee candidates

Ottawa Catholic School Board

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Prepared by
FAIR Ottawa

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Background

What is FAIR Ottawa?

The Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organisation with over one hundred chapters and more than thirty-five thousand members across Canada and the United States. More details can be found on the organisation's website www.fairforall.org.

FAIR is dedicated to advancing civil rights and fundamental freedoms for all Canadians, and promoting a common culture based on fairness, understanding, and humanity. Recognizing Canada as a beautiful mosaic of diverse cultures and people, FAIR supports pro-human beliefs that appreciate the unique identities and common humanity of every single person, regardless of their viewpoints or immutable traits such as skin colour, ancestry or ethnicity.

The FAIR Ottawa chapter was formed in April 2022 and meets twice a month. Its activities are focused on promoting critical thinking, free inquiry, open debate and a common culture based on fairness, understanding, and humanity in Ottawa's schools, workplaces and municipal government.

Why we did the survey

The purpose of the survey is to solicit the views of candidates running for election as trustees of the Ottawa Catholic School Board on questions that are important to FAIR members. Through reporting each candidate's views, FAIR Ottawa aims to help voters decide who to support in the October 24th election. FAIR does not endorse or support any candidate for political office.

How we conducted the survey

Creating the survey

At the first FAIR Ottawa meeting in August of this year a set of guiding questions was determined by the membership. These questions were then refined by a smaller working group, incorporating feedback from members and creating the final survey which is displayed in appendix one at the end of this document. The survey was hosted on a section of the FAIR website where candidates were invited to fill out the survey and submit their responses.

Contacting candidates

Candidates were contacted using the information from the City of Ottawa's website of *Certified and acclaimed candidates and registered third party advertisers* ([link](#)). Candidates were invited to complete the survey by email on Wednesday August 31st, 2022. All but six candidates had an email address listed. Two weeks after sending the first email, all those who had yet to provide a response were contacted by telephone. Thirteen phone calls were made in total. If candidates picked up the call they were reminded of the email and asked to fill out the survey. If they did not pick-up, a message was left with the same information.

How results are being presented

The information gathered from the candidates is being presented exactly as it was submitted through the surveying tool. The results below display all the information that was collected. FAIR Ottawa did not change or edit the responses in any way. The aim in presenting the responses this way is to accurately and faithfully represent what the candidates submitted.

In order to ensure the survey responses are useful to voters they are organised by school board zone. Included are the names of primary and secondary schools within the zone as they are displayed on the school board's website. There is a list of candidates, in alphabetical order for that zone, along with information on whether or not the candidate responded to the survey. After the list of candidates for a zone is each of the questions in the survey and the responses candidates provided. If the candidate left a response field blank, the results don't show anything for that question.

Zone 1 – Ward 5 West Carleton-March, Ward 6 Stittsville-Kanata West, Ward 20 Osgoode, Ward 21 Rideau-Goulbourn

Schools

Elementary

Guardian Angels School
Holy Spirit School
St. Catherine School
St. Isidore School
St. Leonard School

St. Mary School
St. Michael, Corkery School
St. Michael, Fitzroy School
St. Philip School
St. Stephen School

Secondary

Sacred Heart High School

St. Mark High School

Candidates

Jeff Darwin

No contact information

Mardi de Kemp

Did not provide responses

Scott Phelan

Did not provide responses

Responses

None of the candidates running in Zone 1 provided responses

Zone 2 – Ward 4 Kanata North, Ward 23 Kanata South

Schools

Elementary

Georges Vanier Catholic School
Holy Redeemer School
St. Gabriel School
St. Martin de Porres School

St. Isabel School
St. James School
St. Anne School

Secondary

All Saints High School

Holy Trinity Catholic High School

Candidates

Alex Sithole

No contact information

Sandra Moore

Did not provide responses

Responses

None of the candidates running in Zone 2 provided responses

Zone 3 – Ward 1 Orléans, Ward 19 Cumberland

Schools

Elementary

Convent Glen Catholic School
Divine Infant Catholic School
Our Lady of Wisdom School
St. Francis of Assisi School

St. Clare School
St. Dominic School
St. Theresa School

Secondary

St. Matthew High School

St. Peter High School

Candidates

Brian Coburn

Did not provide responses

Marguerite Gravelle

No contact information

Paul Safi

No contact information

Responses

None of the candidates running in Zone 3 provided responses

Zone 4 – Ward 3 Barrhaven, Ward 22 Gloucester South Nepean

Schools

Elementary

Monsignor Paul Baxter School
St. Andrew School
St. Benedict School
St. Cecilia School
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School

St. Emily School
St. Jerome School
St. Luke, Nepean School
St. Patrick School

Secondary

St. Francis Xavier High School
St. Joseph High School

St. Mother Teresa High School

Candidates

Greg Hopkins

Did not provide responses

Nicolas Caravaggio

No contact information

Spencer Warren

Did not provide responses

Responses

None of the candidates running in Zone 4 provided responses

Zone 5 – Ward 2 Innes, Ward 11 Beacon Hill-Cyrville

Schools

Elementary

Chapel Hill Catholic School
Good Shepherd Catholic School
St. Brother André School

St. John Paul II School
St. Kateri Tekakwitha School
Thomas D'Arcy McGee Catholic School

Secondary

Lester B. Pearson Catholic High School

Candidates

Joanne MacEwan

Did not provide responses

Marc Bélisle

Did not provide responses

Responses

None of the candidates running in Zone 5 provided responses

Zone 6 – Ward 8 College, Ward 9 Knoxdale-Merivale

Schools

Elementary

Frank Ryan Catholic Intermediate School	St. John XXIII School
Our Lady of Peace School	St. John the Apostle School
Our Lady of Victory School	St. Monica School
St. Daniel School	St. Rita School
St. Gregory School	

Secondary

St. Paul High School

Candidates

Eugene Milito	Did not provide responses
Glen Armstrong	Did not provide responses
Melissa Fraser-Arnott	Did not provide responses
Patrick Suwalski	Has provided responses

Responses

What motivates you to serve on the school board (i.e., why are you running)? Is there a particular issue about which you are passionate that is part of your motivation to serve?

Patrick Suwalski

As a parent of two kindergarteners, I was very unhappy with the Board's approach to COVID, especially as it pertained to mandates and policies. The Board's process (lack thereof) was one of rule by decree, with little input from even the Board of Trustees. Decisions were made last-minute, and not in line with Public Health guidelines.

I am also very concerned about the Board's continued push for D-I-E processes to be embedded throughout its policies, that will ultimately affect students. Anti-racism is not the opposite of racism. The negative consequences of these policies far outbalance any good that may come from them, in my opinion.

School boards should direct teaching staff to provide extra attention and classroom supports to students based upon race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Patrick Suwalski Strongly Disagree

Boards should create school and program admission policies that prioritise students based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Patrick Suwalski Strongly Disagree

Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics should be considered in deciding who to prioritise for the hiring and promotion of teachers, administrators, and staff.

Patrick Suwalski Strongly Disagree

White supremacy is a major systemic issue in Ontario schools today.

Patrick Suwalski Strongly Disagree

School resource officers should not be present in schools.

Patrick Suwalski Neutral

Potentially controversial subjects and language, even when age appropriate, should not be allowed for discourse in a school setting.

Patrick Suwalski Disagree

I support requiring parental notification and/or approval for student name and gender changes.

Patrick Suwalski Strongly Agree

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Patrick Suwalski

I am continually surprised that surveys such as this one exist. The questions are designed to be abrasive, and answering in agreement with them doesn't further any conversation that is relevant to the school setting.

Zone 7 – Ward 7 Bay, Ward 15 Kitchissippi

Schools

Elementary

Dr. F. J. McDonald Catholic School
Our Lady of Fatima School

St. George School
St. Rose of Lima School

Secondary

Notre Dame High School

Candidates

Danny Arrais

Did not provide responses

Jeremy Wittet

Did not provide responses

Responses

None of the candidates running in Zone 7 provided responses

Zone 8 – Ward 10 Gloucester Southgate, Ward 18 Alta Vista

Schools

Elementary

Prince of Peace School
St. Bernard School
St. Gemma School

St. Luke, Ottawa School
St. Marguerite d'Youville School
St. Thomas More School

Secondary

St. Nicholas Adult High School

St. Patrick's High School

Candidates

Christopher Andrew John Kelly

Has provided responses

Mark D Mullan

Did not provide responses

Responses

What motivates you to serve on the school board (i.e., why are you running)? Is there a particular issue about which you are passionate that is part of your motivation to serve?

Christopher Andrew John Kelly

I have developed skills of my subordinates in the Canadian Armed Forces. I have also developed skills as a communicator and administrator. These skills are essential as a School Board Trustee. I want to help improve the education students receive in Ottawa. I see this goal can be achieved as a School Board Trustee.

School boards should direct teaching staff to provide extra attention and classroom supports to students based upon race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly

Agree

Boards should create school and program admission policies that prioritise students based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly

Disagree

Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics should be considered in deciding who to prioritise for the hiring and promotion of teachers, administrators, and staff.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly Neutral

White supremacy is a major systemic issue in Ontario schools today.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly Neutral

School resource officers should not be present in schools.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly Disagree

Potentially controversial subjects and language, even when age appropriate, should not be allowed for discourse in a school setting.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly Disagree

I support requiring parental notification and/or approval for student name and gender changes.

Christopher Andrew John Kelly Neutral

Zone 9 – Ward 16 River, Ward 17 Capital

Schools

Elementary

Corpus Christi School
Holy Cross School
Holy Family School

St. Augustine School
St. Elizabeth School

Secondary

Immaculata High School

St. Pius X High School

Candidates

Guillermo Fernandez

Has provided responses

Jenny Rivera

Has provided responses

Shelley Lawrence

Did not provide responses

Responses

What motivates you to serve on the school board (i.e., why are you running)? Is there a particular issue about which you are passionate that is part of your motivation to serve?

Guillermo Fernandez

1. Promote a learning environment based on Truth and Faith.
2. I want young Catholics to obtain a solid knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith.
3. I want to provide a support platform for students and parents who are confused with gender orientation, and human sexuality issues with the purpose of helping them find the right path to understanding God's purpose for Creation and the importance of chastity, the sanctity of sex, marriage, and family life.
4. I want to bring back Prayer and Catechism in schools.
5. I want to promote a better understanding of Jesus Christ and the Church to students, educators, and the community.
6. I want to promote the availability of world-class academic platforms to students who are attending homeschooling.
7. I want to promote an improved in-school student program and activities in our schools.
8. I want to have more Church and parental involvement in school activities.
9. I want to ban or stop political messaging that contradicts religion, faith, and morals in schools.
10. I am against the raising of the rainbow/pride flags in our schools.
11. Parents' rights to direct and control education and medical treatment should be upheld.

Jenny Rivera

The fact that I have a passion for education and I strongly believe that if it is in our hands to contribute to changes in our school system then we should do our best to advocate for the interests of those that benefit from it, our kids, our teachers, our community. We need to take action and be a part of the change that we want to see.

In the last two years, following the pandemic, our schools have been faced with many challenges. We as a community can work together to overcome these challenges and guarantee a successful future for our kids.

School boards should direct teaching staff to provide extra attention and classroom supports to students based upon race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Guillermo Fernandez Agree

Jenny Rivera Neutral

Boards should create school and program admission policies that prioritise students based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Guillermo Fernandez Strongly Disagree

Jenny Rivera Disagree

Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics should be considered in deciding who to prioritise for the hiring and promotion of teachers, administrators, and staff.

Guillermo Fernandez Agree

Jenny Rivera Neutral

White supremacy is a major systemic issue in Ontario schools today.

Guillermo Fernandez Disagree

Jenny Rivera Disagree

School resource officers should not be present in schools.

Guillermo Fernandez Disagree

Jenny Rivera Disagree

Potentially controversial subjects and language, even when age appropriate, should not be allowed for discourse in a school setting.

Guillermo Fernandez Agree

Jenny Rivera Agree

I support requiring parental notification and/or approval for student name and gender changes.

Guillermo Fernandez Agree

Jenny Rivera Agree

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Jenny Rivera

No

Zone 10 – Ward 12 Rideau-Vanier, Ward 13 Rideau Rockcliffe, Ward 14 Somerset

Schools

Assumption Catholic School
Our Lady of Mount Carmel School
St. Anthony School
St. Brigid School

St. Michael, Ottawa School
St. Josephine Virtual school
Blessed Carlo Virtual school

Candidates

Cindy Desclouds-Simpson

Did not provide responses

Cameron Bonesso

Has provided responses

Responses

What motivates you to serve on the school board (i.e., why are you running)? Is there a particular issue about which you are passionate that is part of your motivation to serve?

Cameron Bonesso

Hello, my name is Cameron Bonesso and I'm running to be your next Ottawa Catholic School Board Trustee (OCSB) for Zone 10 (Wards 12, 13 and 14).

For years, I've had the pleasure and privilege to live in Zone 10 here in Sandy Hill. Currently, I'm a 22-year-old university student at the University of Ottawa studying Political Science and Public Administration. I also work full-time as the President of Constituent Manager Solutions which is a consulting firm that I founded back in 2020 with my business partner, Gyasi Swann. Before starting my own firm, I worked for three years at the House of Commons as an Executive Assistant and later as Special Advisor to a Member of Parliament.

You may be wondering why exactly is someone as young as myself running for school board trustee — and that's a great question.

One thing I consistently notice about municipal politics is that parents don't often pay attention to the work of our community's local school boards despite them having a large impact on their children's education. I want to work to change that. As a young adult, I can bring a fresh voice to our city's Catholic school board and inspire more members of our community to get involved. Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's clear that many students have faced disruptions and difficulties with their own learning experience. As a university student, I know first-hand how the pandemic has impacted the mental health of young people

which is why my top priority as a candidate is advocating for increased funding for board-wide mental health programs for not only students, but staff as well.

School boards should direct teaching staff to provide extra attention and classroom supports to students based upon race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Cameron Bonesso Disagree

Boards should create school and program admission policies that prioritise students based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.

Cameron Bonesso Strongly Disagree

Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics should be considered in deciding who to prioritise for the hiring and promotion of teachers, administrators, and staff.

Cameron Bonesso Disagree

White supremacy is a major systemic issue in Ontario schools today.

Cameron Bonesso Disagree

School resource officers should not be present in schools.

Cameron Bonesso Disagree


Potentially controversial subjects and language, even when age appropriate, should not be allowed for discourse in a school setting.

Cameron Bonesso Strongly Disagree

I support requiring parental notification and/or approval for student name and gender changes.

Cameron Bonesso Neutral

Appendix 1: Survey as seen by respondents



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School Board Trustee Candidate Survey

Thank you for your interest in taking this school board trustee candidate survey. This is an opportunity to let your potential constituency know clearly where you stand on the issues that are important to them. Responses to this survey will be collected by FAIR Ontario and may be reported on our website.

What is your name?

What is your email address? (Email addresses will not be published)

In which school board district are you running for trustee?
Algoma District School Board

Which electoral zone (Ward/Zone/Area) of your district are you running in (if any)?

What motivates you to serve on the school board (i.e., why are you running)? Is there a particular issue about which you are passionate that is part of your motivation to serve?

For the next set of questions, please indicate your level of agreement with the statements provided.

School boards should direct teaching staff to provide extra attention and classroom supports to students based upon race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Boards should create school and program admission policies that prioritise students based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other immutable characteristics should be considered in deciding who to prioritise for the hiring and promotion of teachers, administrators, and staff.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

White supremacy is a major systemic issue in Ontario schools today.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

School resource officers should not be present in schools.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Potentially controversial subjects and language, even when age appropriate, should not be allowed for discourse in a school setting.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I support requiring parental notification and/or approval for student name and gender changes.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Is there anything else you would like to add?

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