

Campaign Platform and Priorities

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Accountability and Transparency

As an elected official, OCSB Trustees are accountable to the electorate of Catholic ratepayers in the zone they represent. If elected, bringing greater accountability and transparency to the work of the Ottawa Catholic School Board would be one of my top priorities.

I also believe in having more open communication with ratepayers. I commit to always being accessible to hear your concerns, feedback and suggestions. We saw an example of a lack transparency this year when parents and staff impacted by the [recent decision impacting bus attendants](#) were left scrambling to get answers from the administration and board. If elected, to improve accountability and transparency I will:

- Seek the input of the students, parents, educators, and other ratepayers I seek to represent before acting on their behalf when important motions or topics come up for debate.
- Publish a bi-monthly email newsletter during the school year for Zone 10 specifically to keep parents and ratepayers informed on new developments at the school board and my work inside and outside of board meetings.
- Work collaboratively with local school councils and the Ottawa Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA • PIC) to encourage more parents to get involved in their local school council. I believe that school administration becomes more accountable when parents get to play a greater role in the decision-making of their children's school.

CAMERON BONESSO

FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

Defending Local Representation

In April, the Ford government introduced the [*Putting Student Achievement First Act*](#) in response to issues involving trustee spending and continued deficits and financial mismanagement by school boards across the province. The *Putting Student Achievement First Act* has introduced several reforms to the organization of school boards and the roles of trustees, some of which I agree and disagree with. You can read the full text of Bill 101 and the scope of the reforms by [clicking here](#).

The role of a school board trustee is that of an advocate where parents and ratepayers can voice their concerns to. I strongly believe in the need to defend local representation, and believe that the role of trustees serves as a critical link between the community and board administration. To this extent, I would fight back against any attempts by the province to eliminate the position outright as the Ministry of Education was originally poised to do so. Further, trustees now have less power when it comes to the approval of their board's annual budget. If trustees disagree with a budget, the final decision on its approval now rests with the minister. Trustees having less impact over the budget means they have a diminished role when it comes to financial oversight.

Lastly, I disagree with how the reforms have eliminate the use of student school climate surveys. School climate surveys serve as an anonymous way where students, parents and educators can share feedback on bullying, inclusion, school safety, and school culture. These surveys serve as an important measure of the experiences of a school's community. If elected, on defending local representation I will:

- Work with the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) to advocate for the rollback of some of these reforms, especially reforms that diminish the ability of trustees to be effective representatives for their communities.
- Fight back against any attempt to eliminate the position of elected school board trustees at the Ottawa Catholic School Board. Catholic ratepayers, who have a portion of their property taxes go towards school board funding, deserve to have a say in how those funds are being overseen by the Board of Trustees. I believe that the ballot box is the best way for ratepayers to have their say.

CAMERON BONESSO

FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

Equality and Quality of Education

Every student deserves to have access to a quality Catholic education. I strongly believe that every student should have an equal opportunity to succeed. Equality does not mean giving each student or school the same resources. Equality in education means recognizing that different students and schools have different needs. We need to allocate funding fairly so every student has the opportunity to thrive in their own way. I support the board's [Student Achievement Plan \(SAP\)](#) and [multi-year strategic plan](#) as avenues for the OCSB to continue delivering quality education.

Consistently, OCSB students perform above the provincial average in literacy, mathematics, and graduation rates. The quality of education offered is also part of the reason why the OCSB continues to grow in enrolment year after year. With these increases in enrolment, we must be responsive to new challenges brought by a large increase in new students. If elected, my plan to support the board's work to continue to offer quality education is to:

- Continue supporting the board's Student Achievement Plan (SAP), multi-year strategic plan, and other plans or initiatives that promote inclusion and togetherness.
- Ensure that students across Zone 10 and the rest of Ottawa have the ability to use technology, such as artificial intelligence, to enhance their learning experience through online learning and promote asynchronous online learning through virtual schools such as St. Josephine Virtual School and St. Carlo Virtual School. To this extent, I support the board's [guiding framework for using artificial intelligence](#). Programs that get students involved in STEM through the use of technology are also important. While I support incorporating technology in learning, I oppose the use of mobile phones in classrooms outside of educational instruction per the province's [cellphone policy](#).
- Advocate to the province for the need to have smaller classroom sizes and less classrooms that combine multiple grades together. Teachers have been vocal that students learn best when they're in a classroom setting with peers their age and where teachers can dedicate more time to each student.

CAMERON BONESSO

FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

Fiscal Responsibility

Over the past year, the Ministry of Education has placed several school boards across Ontario under supervision because of poor financial management and trustees approving spending on priorities not related to student achievement. As stewards of taxpayer dollars from Catholic ratepayers, elected trustees have a duty to be fiscally responsible. On the changes to trustee compensation, the honoraria for trustees is now capped at \$10,000 per annum. Despite being a part-time position, the position of a trustee truly is a full-time responsibility that shouldn't be taken lightly. I believe that trustees deserve to be fairly compensated, however trustees also have a responsibility to be fiscally responsible with expenses in support of their work.

As a business owner and someone who has served on community boards, I bring experience managing balanced budgets and an understanding of effective board governance. If elected, my plan to be fiscally responsible is to:

- Work collaboratively with fellow trustees to support and deliver a balanced budget that focuses on student achievement first and foremost.
- Vote against any budget or motion that raises executive compensation over the next 2 years. After those 2 years, I will only support a budget or motion that raises executive compensation for the sake of inflation adjustment (commonly referred to as a cost-of-living adjustment or COLA).
- Advocate for increased funding from the province to support the OCSB's ongoing operating budget and capital plan.
- Cover as much of my board-related expenses out of pocket as reasonable. The province's recent changes to school boards have removed much of trustees' discretionary expenses, however trustees can still expense millage and communications tools such as mobile phones and computers. I plan to cover these costs where possible in the interest of ratepayers.

CAMERON BONESSO

FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

Mental Health

The mental health and well-being of both students and educators is a top priority for my campaign. A few years since coming out of the pandemic, we've seen many students struggle with their interpersonal skills and adapting back to in-person learning. Ontario has seen a sharp increase in anxiety, depression, and psychological distress amongst students that must be addressed. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), approximately 1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario has a mental health challenge. This is a crisis with real consequences for students that needs to be addressed. If elected, my plan to support the mental health of students and educators is to:

- Continue to support the board's existing [Mental Health, Addiction and Well-Being Strategy](#) as well as the board's [Mental Health Action Plan](#). This includes looking at how we can expand the existing mental health and well-being resources offered.
- Promote the further display of resources that highlight mental health challenges, healthy coping mechanisms, and support systems offered by the OCSB and other community partners such as Kids Help Phone. Often, students don't realize the full amount of support available to them because they simply aren't aware. Having these types of resources readily available helps fix that.

CAMERON BONESSO

FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

Safe School Drinking Water

A report published in March of this year by the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) outlines that several school boards across Ontario have aging lead infrastructure. The report titled ["'F' for Effort: Ontario is falling behind on getting lead out of school drinking water"](#) highlights Ontario's failure to update its nearly 20-year-old regulation on safe drinking water is putting educators and students at risk.

Out of all 72 publicly funded school boards in the province, the Ottawa Catholic School Board ranked the 6th worst by the number of tests conducted at schools with drinking water over 10ppb. The report showed the Ottawa Catholic School Board had 22 exceedances over 10ppb in 2024 and 2025. For context, drinking water with 10 parts-per-billion or greater is widely considered unsafe across most of Canada. Lead is highly toxic to children because their developing brains and nervous systems absorb the metal much easier than adults. Health impacts include impairment to cognitive function and reduced attention spans among other impacts. If elected, on promoting safe school drinking water I will:

- Commit to working with fellow OCSB Trustees to introduce a motion to instruct the board's Superintendent of Planning and Facilities to undertake a review of all aging lead infrastructure, including allocating funding for independent third-party testing. Aging lead infrastructure that is proven to lead to unsafe drinking water should be replaced.

CAMERON BONESSO

FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

School Safety (Community Hazard Zones)

In February of this year, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) designated the neighbourhood around St. Anthony School located at the corner of Booth Street and Gladstone Avenue to be a ["community hazard zone"](#). This is due to an unsafe neighbourhood caused by the open drug consumption outside the nearby Somerset West Community Health Centre and New Dawn Medical's safe injection site. In response, OSTA is now offering bus service to students that would otherwise be able to walk from their homes in Chinatown, Little Italy, and Centretown West.

The fact that OSTA was forced to take this measure highlights a bigger issue in the community. I've spoken to many parents about this issue, and their concern is that they just want to be able to safely walk their children to and from school. It's unacceptable that young students are being forced to take buses to avoid addicts getting high and their discarded needles on the sidewalk. To be clear, I fully support OSTA's designation, but it's a Band-Aid solution that doesn't address the underlying issue of drug use and community safety. I disagree with the notion that this solution is somehow "stigmatizing" or "paints a picture of an unsafe neighbourhood" as some politicians have suggested. As someone who has worked in the building next to the Somerset West Community Health Centre, I can tell you the reality of how unsafe the neighbourhood can be. The incumbent trustee for our zone has been absent on this issue. If elected, here are the steps I would take to address school safety and the community hazard zone surrounding St. Anthony School:

- Work with community partners such as [Needle Hunters](#) to prioritize areas around St. Anthony School for the clean up of discarded needles and other drug paraphernalia.
- Develop a safe-walk program with the school administration and parent council that would allow for nearby students to be walked to and from school while avoiding the Somerset West Community Health Centre and accompanied by their peers and trusted adults.
- Advocate for a greater presence from the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) in the immediate vicinity of school property during school hours to ensure the safety of students, parents, and educators.

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FOR OCSB TRUSTEE – ZONE 10

Special Education

With many students having different learning styles and special needs, it's imperative that the OCSB continues to offer educational programming that is responsive to them. Over the past few months, I've spoken with many parents about how the OCSB can better support their children. You can [click here](#) to read the OCSB's Special Education Report for 2025 which outlines programming offered. If elected, my plan to support special education is to:

- Work collaboratively with the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to improve the quality of special education offered. Under the *Education Act*, the board's SEAC is responsible for providing important advice on special education to their local board or school authority. SEAC is also responsible for making recommendations to their board on any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students.
- Defend the position of bus attendants who provide critical support to children living with special needs and disabilities on the bus to and from school.
- Promote a greater emphasis on "life skills" classes which teaches students living with special needs functional literacy and provides them with pre-vocational skills. By teaching life skills in an accommodating classroom, students learn how to live a fulfilling life and make a meaningful impact in society.
- Support greater educational programming for students defined as gifted learners. Gifted learners deserve to have an individual education plan (IEP) that encompasses a curriculum that is responsive to their unique cognitive abilities and learning style.
- Support the implementation of the board's [Accessibility Multi-Year Plan](#) which has the goal of eliminating barriers for individuals living with disabilities at board properties such as schools and the board's main office in Nepean.