

**YUKON CATHOLIC SCHOOL
COUNCILS BOOKLET**

**AN INFORMATION BOOKLET
FOR CANDIDATES AND COUNCIL MEMBERS
OF YUKON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**



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WELCOME

Congratulations on your election as a Catholic School Council member! We welcome you to our community as leaders in and advocates for Catholic education in Yukon.

Catholic School Councils play an essential role in Yukon Catholic schools. Established under the Yukon Education Act, they support and guide key aspects of school life while working together to strengthen student learning, staff well-being, and the overall success of school communities.

Grounded in the Catholic faith, Yukon Catholic schools are dedicated to educating the whole person: mind, body, and spirit. This mission is reflected in a strong Catholic identity that shapes learning, faith formation, and participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. Since Council members come from diverse backgrounds and bring different experiences and perspectives, it is by working respectfully and collaboratively that members help build welcoming school communities rooted in Gospel values and respect for the dignity of every person.

School Councils carry defined responsibilities under the Yukon Education Act and, in the context of Catholic Schools, operate within a Catholic framework supported by the wider Catholic education community. To strengthen collaboration and shared purpose, Yukon Catholic School Councils are united through membership and participation in the Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY).

This guide provides information to help build a common understanding of publicly funded Catholic Education in Yukon, as well as the roles and relationships that support our shared goals. This information guide intends to explore the distinctive identity, role and purpose that Catholic schools have in the Yukon. This booklet is intended only as an introduction and guide.

For more in-depth information of general school council responsibilities, please review AYSCBC's "Serving on a School Council" handbook.

A PASTORAL MESSAGE

Dear Catholic School Council members,

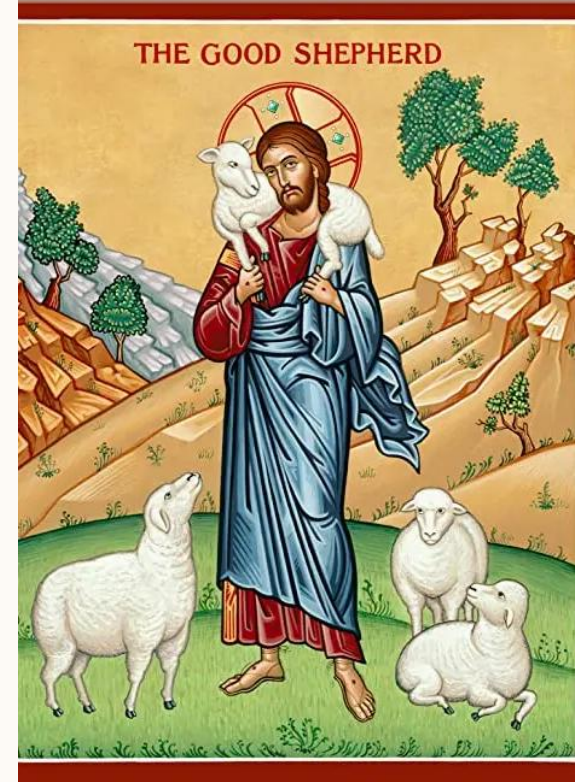
Many thanks to all of you who are giving of your time to serve our Catholic school communities. As school council members you play a vital role in advocating for authentic Catholic education and being the voice of parents and caregivers who have entrusted their children to a Christ-centered academic environment.

May the love of Christ, which showers us with the gift of his Word and the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, be the center of our Catholic schools shining as beacons of hope, truth and unity.

I pray that the Lord will guide you in your decisions and discussions and bless you throughout your term. I look forward to working with all of you. I remain,

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Héctor Vila
Bishop of Whitehorse



CALLED TO SERVE

Catholic Education in Yukon has strong historic roots in the story of our land. It involves a unique partnership between the school, home, and parish life. Together this triad seeks to develop a student's whole person by integrating academic excellence and faith. The Government of Yukon is committed to providing Yukon students with an exceptional education system in publicly funded Catholic schools.

Catholic schools deliver the Yukon public school curriculum while supporting the spiritual, academic, physical, emotional, and social development of students through the permeation and integration of Gospel values and the sacramental life of the Church.

The central focus of Catholic education is Jesus Christ.

“Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts, but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom”

Address of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Regions of Chicago, Indianapolis and Milwaukee (USA) on their “Ad Limina” visit, May 30, 1998



MISSION STATEMENT OF YUKON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

To Educate children in a Catholic learning environment.

Through the sharing of knowledge and Christian values and by celebrating our Catholic faith, students are assisted in developing a personal faith and an understanding and appreciation of self and others. Each child has the opportunity to strive for academic excellence and to reach his or her potential as a life-long learner.

The uniqueness of each child is celebrated.



STATEMENT OF VALUES AND BELIEFS OF YUKON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

We believe that parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators, and the Catholic community are the key contributors to Catholic education. All work together for the emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, social and spiritual development of each learner. Values taught by example empower and support children for a lifetime of learning and participation in their own community and the global community.

These values include:

- a strong personal relationship with God,
- love, respect, and forgiveness for oneself and others,
- a sense of self-worth,
- critical and creative thinking skills,
- interpersonal skills, and
- witnessing to our faith in the world

ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Yukon has a unique model for the role of school councils, which is different from many other areas of Canada. As elected members of school councils, you are given a high level of involvement, responsibility and authority, set out in the Education Act. Council's role in representing the interests of students, parents and other community members is important.

The Education Act includes a list of powers and duties that a school council “shall” carry out, including:

- review and approve the school objectives, priorities and courses of study
- make recommendations regarding the school's budget
- collaborate to develop a dispute resolution process
- keep complete and accurate reports on meetings and provide those to the Minister of Education within 30 days
- keep complete and accurate financial records for provision to the Minister of Education
- establish an attendance policy for the school
- take part in the hiring process for the principal

The Act also sets out a list of activities that the school council “may” do, including:

- propose and offer locally-developed courses of study and instructional materials (as approved by the Minister)
- provide advice to the Minister on such things as the school year, the school day, school closures, staff requirements, transportation, school renovations, the school's capital budget and school programs
- approve field trips
- request that evaluations be done of the principal, teachers or other staff
- recommend the dismissal, transfer, discipline or demotion of any staff, with reasons
- establish committees, rules and policies
- approve certain spending

Review AYSCBC's "Serving on a School Council" Handbook for a more information regarding this role and processes
Education Act, Section 113, Authority and Responsibility Under the Education Act



SERVING AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBER

In addition to the roles described previously, school council members at a Catholic school also have the privilege to:

- represent Catholic school families and Catholic parishioners
- support and advocate for Catholic education
- build relationships with educators, parents, students, and the Church
- develop and support CEAY goals particularly through 2 nominees of council representing as Directors of CEAY, at least one of which is a council member
- Each have 5 elected council members and serve a 2-year term
- Every Yukon school council must hold an Annual General Meeting in September and our three Catholic schools holds this jointly with CEAY support
- Councils, often through CEAY, host other social and educational events with our schools and parish communities.
- Council meetings are public and all documented minutes are for public view.



CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF YUKON

The Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY) is a non-profit society which operates under Yukon Societies Act rules and regulations, and within the context of the Yukon education system.

The Association provides a forum for partners to come together to discuss issues which affect all Yukon Catholic schools, and which fall within the scope of its Constitution and Bylaws.

Membership

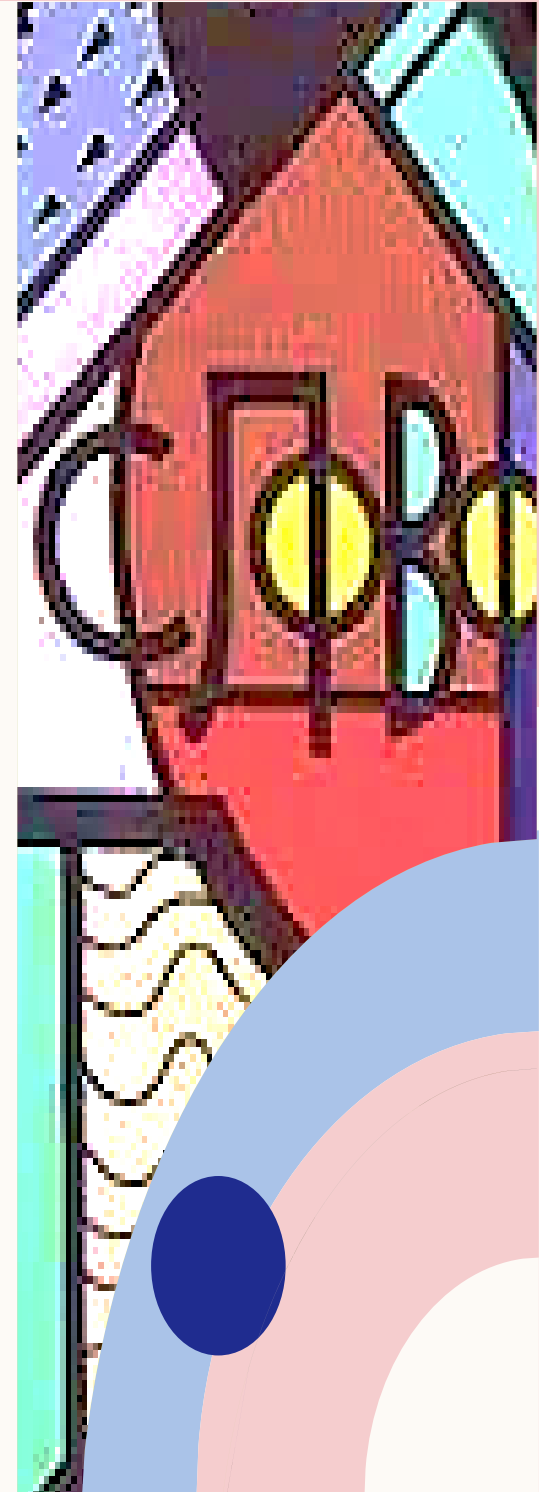
Voting members are our Yukon Catholic School Councils. Each council's vote is represented by a delegate appointed by that council for that meeting.

Non-voting members include the administrators from each Catholic school, a representative from the Catholic Episcopal Corporation, the Religious Education coordinators, two parish representatives within the Diocese of Whitehorse, and the superintendent(s) responsible for Yukon Catholic Schools

Executive

The Executive is comprised of 2 nominees from each Catholic school. One Director (Executive member) per school must be a current council member. The 2nd Director for that school must be nominated by the school council and is not required to be a council member. The Directors are voted for at the joint AGM in September by the Yukon Catholic School Councils. The term of service is 2 years.

CEAY supports the **Mission Statement** and **Statement of Values & Beliefs of Yukon Catholic Schools** and recognizes the role of the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse in the Catholic schools.



CODE OF CONDUCT DECLARATION OF CEAY

Reference CEAY Constitution and Bylaws, Part 2, s5 (2)

As a member of the Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY), I will:

- 1) Devote time, thought and study to the role and responsibilities of a CEAY member so I can provide effective service to the Yukon Catholic Schools.
- 2) Be familiar with CEAY policies and operating principles, Yukon Catholic Schools' policies and documents, and the Yukon Education Act and Regulations particularly those that relate to School Councils and Catholic schools.
- 3) Support and be guided by the CEAY Mission and Mandate, the Yukon Catholic Schools' Mission and Values & Beliefs statements, and the CEAY Strategic Plan (Circle of Caring IV).
- 4) Support the good name of Yukon Catholic Schools, School Councils and CEAY, and not disturb their well-being nor hamper their work.
- 5) Work with my fellow CEAY members in a spirit of harmony, cooperation and respect for differences of opinion.
- 6) Promote positive and collaborative relationships on the CEAY, and between CEAY and the greater school community.
- 7) Work with my fellow CEAY members to support the goals of the Yukon Catholic Schools' education and growth plans.
- 8) Assist the CEAY to excel in all of its efforts and undertakings.
- 9) Act as an advocate at the school and community levels for excellence in Catholic education according to the programs approved by the Yukon Government Minister of Education, Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 10) Declare any conflict of interest. Perform in a manner that reflects service to the community on behalf of all students and parents.
- 11) Recognize that I have no authority to take individual action against a properly discussed and informed decision made by the CEAY as a whole.
- 12) Respect the confidentiality of the CEAY and never disclose any confidential information I may have access to, including through other involvements at the school or parish.
- 13) Use the appropriate communication channels to resolve conflict and honour the principles and procedures in the Yukon Department of Education's School Council Dispute Resolution Procedure Policy.

1962 AGREEMENT

In 1962, an Agreement was signed between the Yukon Commissioner and the Episcopal Corporation (the Bishop) for the formation of educational facilities for children of Roman Catholic parents, separately from other students, as “separate schools”.

It established the framework within which the Episcopal Corporation and the Yukon Government would deal with:

- The transfer of the two Catholic schools to the Yukon Government in trust and the payment to the Corporation
- The rights and responsibilities of separate schools
- Financial support from the Government of Yukon
- Observation of all statutory and other lawful requirements
- Requirements for a separate school for grades 1 to 9; *for example, having no less than 26 eligible children to attend the school*
- Requirements for a separate school for grades 10, 11, and 12; *for example, establish a high school for more than 12 eligible students*
- Consultation with the Episcopal Corporation for approval of teacher’s suitability to teach in separate school before hiring, and Corporation’s recruitment and recommendations of teachers, principals, and vice-principals
- The responsibility for instructing and training students attending separate schools, in Roman Catholic religion and morality

MOU AGREEMENT 2025

- The Government of Yukon and the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse have renewed their longstanding partnership by signing a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will help ensure Yukon families continue to have access to high-quality, faith-based education within the public school system.
- This occurred on August 15th, 2025. This important agreement affirms the role of the Bishop and outlines the responsibilities of the Department of Education for Yukon Catholic Separate Schools in Whitehorse.
- The MOU complements the provisions of the *Education Act, 2002* and the 1962 Agreement, which remain the principal authorities governing the operation of Catholic separate schools.
- The memorandum reflects the joint commitment of both parties to supporting student learning and wellbeing, promoting academic excellence and the teaching of Catholic values within the public school system and ensuring safe, inclusive and caring school environments. It also affirms their shared responsibility to uphold truth and reconciliation with Yukon First Nations and to align school operations with current educational priorities and practices.

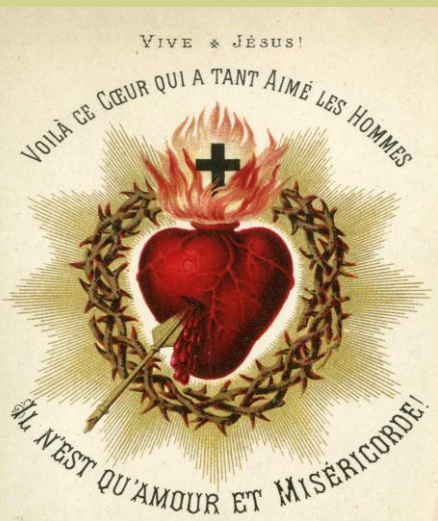
General Roles and Responsibilities of the Episcopal Corporation

The parties agree that the general roles and responsibilities of the Episcopal Corporation are to:

- 3.1. provide faith-based and pastoral guidance to Catholic separate schools and recommendations to the Department of Education on matters relating to the implementation and the permeation of Catholic values and morals in Catholic separate schools;
- 3.2. provide recommendations to the Department of Education that are consistent with Catholic values and morals and Catholic education including curricula, programs and resources for Catholic separate schools;
- 3.3. provide recommendations to the Department of Education that are in support of the Catholic identity and Catholic mission on educational staffing, professional development and school-based activities in Catholic separate schools; and
- 3.4. exercise evaluative and approval authority regarding the suitability, with respect to the Catholic identity and Catholic mission, of administrators and educational staff in Catholic separate schools, as per processes outlined in protocols and agreements with the Department of Education

The document also includes roles of the Department of Education, and shared roles of both collaborators.

You are invited to read the MOU and the letter sent to CEAY and parishioners on the diocese's website rcdw.ca.



5 MARKS OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

	Marks	Standards
1.	Grounded in Christian Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• driven by a mission which views all men and women with an inherent dignity as sons and daughters of God
2.	Imbued with a Catholic Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• has a visible and tangible Catholic vision evident in its physical space, liturgical celebrations, and prayer life.
3.	Animated by Communion and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• has an academic curriculum that integrates a vision of faith within the learner outcomes and teaching strategies
4.	Sustained by Gospel Witness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hires and nurtures teachers that are living witnesses to the Gospel and intentional disciples of Jesus Christ and his Church
5.	Shaped by a Spirituality of Communion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognizes that each stakeholder is responsible for the common good

- The Five Marks of a Catholic School provide Yukon Catholic School Council members with an adapted framework for leadership in publicly funded Catholic education. They help guide decisions and advocacy in ways that uphold Catholic identity while serving the common good. In the Yukon's diverse communities, the Five Marks can serve as tools to help Catholic schools remain faith-centered, community-responsive, and aligned with the mission of Catholic education within the public system.
- Developed by Archbishop Michael Miller in 2015; the Holy See identifies the principal features of a Catholic school

BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN YUKON

Catholic Education in the Yukon has a history dating back to the gold rush of 1898 in Dawson City.

A missionary Jesuit priest Fr William Judge invited the Sisters of St. Anne to help establish a hospital, a church and expand to education.

Oblates Fr. Gendreau and Brother Dumas built St. Mary's school near the hospital, and it opened in **1899** as Dawson City's first school.

- Commissioner Ogilvie and council passed **the first Yukon School Ordinance in 1899** and a **second one was passed in 1902** that ensured the support of both public and separate schools. These ordinances were **consolidated in 1914** and granted full recognition of the Catholic school in Dawson City. In **1937** the existence of a separate Catholic school spared the Yukon Territory from annexation into the province of British Columbia.

With the construction of the Alaska Highway 1942-43, the population of Whitehorse grew. Four **Sisters of Providence from Montreal arrived in 1946** to help with education. An Oblate Bishop Coudert worked with the Territorial government to **obtain legal status for the school** and the Ordinance from 1950 reiterated the rights of religious minority to set up separate schools.

- By **1956**, enrollment in the Catholic school reached 220 students. The Sisters built Christ the King Elementary School (**CKES**) which enrolled grades 1-10. In **1959**, enrollment grew to 345 students so the Sisters of Providence, the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse (**CECW**) and members of the Catholic community made an application to build Christ the King High School (**CKHS**) for grades 8-10. CKES and CKHS formed elected school committees whose membership consisted of representatives of the parents of children attending the school.

In **1962**, the Yukon government signed the separate school agreement with the Catholic Episcopal Corporation.

In **1982**, a **Statement of Philosophy for Catholic Schools of Whitehorse** was developed and from this statement, an **Admission Policy was written** to set out the terms by which Catholic and non-Catholic children would attend Catholic schools. By this time, there was a waitlist for entry in the Catholic schools. From 1990 -1992, enrollment was high in CKES (K-Grade 5) and Christ the King Junior Secondary School (gr 6-9) so parents and Catholic stakeholders considered plans for a second elementary school in Porter Creek.

- In September **1993 Holy Family Elementary school (HFES)** was opened for students in kindergarten to grade 6.

BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN YUKON

From the Education Act (1990), **each school could establish a school council**. With three Catholic school councils, the members wanted to work together with issues that affected all Catholic schools. **Joint council meetings began November 1993**, and the council members invited school administrators, religious education coordinators, the Bishop and clergy to attend.

In April 1993, a formal strategic plan was developed with the Catholic community.

- From this first strategic planning process came the **Mission Statement** and declaration of **Values and Beliefs**. One goal from **Circle of Caring I** plan was to expand CKJSS to a full high school. The partners in Catholic education worked together to add a grade a year, from **1996 to 1998**. Vanier Catholic Senior Secondary school (VCSS) had the first Grade 12 graduating class in **1999**.
- In **Circle of Caring II** (2004), one of the four goals included governance. It was decided to **maintain the relationship with the Yukon Department of Education and to form an Association** instead of forming a school board.
- In **Circle of Caring III** (2012), CEAY reviewed its mandate and identified internal and external issues impacting all Catholic schools.

In **Circle of Caring IV** (2017), goals included the following:

- ✓ 1) to ensure a distinctly Catholic learning environment
- ✓ 2) to build stronger relationships between Catholic schools and the church
- ✓ 3) to build understanding of Catholic education within Yukon
- ✓ 4) to advise on capital needs of schools

In March 2006, the Catholic Education committee (**CEC**) was formed and this committee continued to report at the Joint council meetings.

In March 2007, the CEC changed to become an association. **The Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY)** was formed with voting members from the three Catholic school councils and non-voting members from partners in Catholic Education including school administrators, Catholic Episcopal Association and the superintendent. A representative from each parish was added later as non-voting members to help with the goal of strengthening connections between home, school and church. These meetings replaced the historic Joint Council meetings. In **2008** this Association was fully registered as a non-profit society in the Yukon.

In February 2016, CEAY became a member of the **Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association (ACSTA)**. ACSTA was formed in 1966 to support and represent 24 member boards from across Alberta, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. Their mission is to celebrate, preserve, promote and enhance Catholic education. Membership provides valuable resources and support to assist with delivery of quality Catholic education for all students. ACSTA advocates for the Catholic school systems at the provincial & territorial level. It also organizes annual faith formation opportunities available to teachers, administrators and school council members.



THANK YOU

This information booklet is brought to you in collaboration with our partners in Catholic Education.

Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY)

Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards, and Committees (AYSCBC)

Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA)

Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse

For additional information and resources, please visit their websites.

CEAY: <https://www.ceayukon.ca/>

RCDW: <https://www.rcdw.ca/>

ACSTA: <https://www.acsta.ab.ca/>

AYSCBC: <https://www.ayscbc.org/school-councils>

Elections Yukon: <https://electionsyukon.ca/en/school-elections>