

Election brings new faces to Catholic school boards

The Edmonton Catholic school board, which had been the centre of controversy and made headlines across the province, will have five new faces after the Oct. 16 municipal election.

And in one central Edmonton ward, a candidate who is not Catholic nevertheless came a close third, according to unofficial results. The numbers will be confirmed by Oct. 20 at noon.

Incumbents Patricia Grell, Larry Kowalcyk, Cindy Olsen, and John Acheson did not seek re-election. Veteran trustees Laura Thibert and Debbie Engel are the only returning trustees. The previous school board also saw trustee disputes over transgender policies and religious education requirements.

“It looks like a brand new board basically so that will be interesting, and I have a lot of hope,” said political scientist Rev. Terry Kersch, president of St. Joseph’s College.

“They seem to have backgrounds that value the role and distinctiveness of Catholic education. It looks like their values are in the right place but again, the proof of the pudding is in the eating as they say, so we’ll see how they work out.”

Newcomer Lisa Turchansky unseated veteran trustee Marilyn Bergstra by a margin of 1,047 votes in southwest Edmonton’s Ward 76. She blamed dysfunction on the previous board for fueling a movement to get rid of the publicly-funded Catholic school system in Alberta.

Kersch said he hopes “that this current board will properly reflect the value and distinctiveness of Catholic education and particularly its social value.”

Kersch said he’s disappointed by the low voter turnout city-wide for the election. Only 31.5 per cent of eligible voters turned out this year, compared to 34.5 per cent in 2013.

For more information and election results (as available) from your local school district, see their links:

- Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (voir les résultats officiels du vote)
- East Central Alberta Catholic Schools (view election results)
- Edmonton Catholic Schools (view City election results)
- Evergreen Catholic Schools (view election results)

- [Elk Island Catholic Schools \(view election results\)](#)
- [Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools \(view election results\)](#)
- [Living Waters Catholic Schools \(view election results\)](#)
- [Lloydminster Catholic Schools \(view election results\)](#)
- [Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools \(view election results\)](#)
- [St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Schools \(view election results\)](#)
- [Complete results for Alberta](#)