

Aurora Votes 2018: Catholic trustee candidate de Roos wants to represent whole community



By Brock Weir

Paul de Roos wants to bring increased transparency to the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB).

Mr. de Roos, a dad of a little boy less than a year old and an Aurora resident for over 20 years, is one of three candidates vying to be the next YCDSB Trustee representing Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville and, if elected, he promises to represent the whole community at the table, not just parents.

"The School Board Trustee has to be a representative not of the school board to parents, the trustee needs to be representative of the community at the school board table," he says. "We need to be an oversight on the operations of the school board, working in the best interests of the entire community, parents included. The school flow of the school board should be, in my view, concern flow from the community and the trustee brings those concerns to the board."

Mr. de Roos, a graduate of Cardinal Carter Secondary School, from which he went to York University to obtain his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, has been long-involved with the YCDSB.

In putting his name forward, he not only wanted to focus on bringing First Aid Training back into schools, along with new programs to equip students with the personal finance savvy they will need in the future, but also to bring transparency to the system.

"I am very much for the idea of a transparent and open school board that has a very open decision-making process," he says. "In my view, the trend of governance is to become more transparent at all levels of government, whether it is Federal, Provincial, Municipal or School Board. We need to be more transparent to the taxpayers that we are making efficient decisions that are in their best interests."

While he says there were specific instances in mind where he felt the board had not been transparent, he declines to elaborate on what he views those issues to be.

Looking ahead to the next four years, Mr. de Roos says, if elected, he will also focus on strengthening the identity of the York Catholic District School Board. He is a firm opponent of any discussions on merging public and Catholic boards across the Province, a position which was been promoted most prominently by the Green Party of Ontario.

"I definitely disagree with that strongly," he says. "We have a new government in Queen's Park, the PC Government, and we need to make them aware that Catholic school boards in Ontario, on average, are dollar for dollar more efficient than public school boards in delivering education, so it just doesn't make sense. Why would you want to merge something that is more efficient with something that is less efficient? It just doesn't make any sense."

"Upfront costs for merging school boards is alarming; it can be as high as \$11.2 to \$2 billion in overall merging costs. At a time when the government is trying to trim the deficit, where are they going to find up to \$2 billion to put together this merger of an efficient school board into an inefficient school system? At this time, it doesn't make any sense at all from a fiscal perspective." Nor does it make any sense to measure student success solely by whether or not they head to university.

Outcomes need to be measured in many different ways," he says. "Now they are looking at achievement beyond post-secondary education: how many students go to university, how many students go to college, and so on. Even that doesn't necessarily have any indication on success rate because what's good for one student might not be the correct career path for another student. The concept of promoting trades in the school is running up against this entire concept that success is graduating from high school and going out into university. While that could be a great path to success for one student, that may not be best path to success for the next student."