



# Questions & Answers about Tax Declaration

## Introduction

This document was created to answer some of the common questions that arise when taxpayers are determining to which school board they pay their education property taxes.

It is noted throughout that declaration of property taxes depends on the faith of the property owner. It is not a matter of choice, personal preference, where one works or where one's children attend or have attended school.

If you would like more information about any aspect of property tax declaration, you may contact Joel Lloyd, Superintendent, Administrative Services, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Phone 659-7021 or email [jlloyd@gscs.sk.ca](mailto:jlloyd@gscs.sk.ca)

## Overview

In areas where both public and separate school divisions exist, the education portion of property taxes is automatically directed to the public school division unless the taxpayer indicates the taxes should be paid to the separate division.

For this reason, it is important for Catholic taxpayers to ensure that their tax notice reflects they are Catholic school supporters. The city, town or rural municipality in which they live will then direct their school taxes to the Catholic school division.

If you are Catholic, in order to have your taxes support the Catholic school board you must fill out a tax declaration form and submit it to the office of your municipality. The forms are available by request at your municipal office.

The question of which school board the taxes support should be based only on the religious faith of the taxpayer.

Property taxes are an important source of funding for all school boards, which also receive provincial government grants. This system ensures stable funding for all school boards.

## School Division Amalgamation and Taxation

In June 2014, Warman's new Catholic school division amalgamated with St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division #20 – commonly known as Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. The division also includes the communities of Biggar, Humboldt and Martensville.

As well, rural Catholic school divisions were formed in fall 2006 to serve the areas around Aberdeen, Clavet and South Corman Park. They also amalgamated with the former Saskatoon Catholic division and are now part of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

The school board now consists of 10 trustees and includes representatives for all of the communities now served. Martensville, Warman and the rural areas surrounding Saskatoon are represented by Trustee Wayne Stus (477-0086, [wstus@gscs.sk.ca](mailto:wstus@gscs.sk.ca))

In the rural areas and in Martensville and Warman, our expanded school board has given an official voice to those Catholic families whose children were already attending Saskatoon Catholic schools.

Under provincial law, all Catholic residents of these areas can now specify, or officially "declare," that the education portion of their property taxes be directed to the Catholic school board.

### Questions about tax declaration

**QUESTION:** I am Catholic and live in Martensville or Warman. Do I need to change my tax declaration?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Catholics living in Martensville and area should contact their municipal office to change their tax declaration. This will ensure their property taxes are paid to the Catholic school board now representing this area. This is especially important because **any undeclared property owner will be deemed a public school supporter.**

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**QUESTION:** How do I change my property tax declaration?

**ANSWER:** You must fill out a tax declaration form. These are available by request at your municipal office. On the form, you will be asked to supply your name and address. It also asks that you answer Yes or No to the following question:

*"I am a member of the minority religious faith that established the St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division #20."*

Completed forms can then be returned or mailed to the municipal office. Filling out the form is a one-time process. It does not need to be filled out annually.

**QUESTION:** Can someone who is *not* Catholic pay their taxes to the Catholic school board if their children attend or have attended Catholic schools?

**ANSWER:** No. The allocation of property taxes is based exclusively on the faith of the property owner(s). It is not a matter of personal choice, preference, business, employment or where one's children attend or have attended school.

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**QUESTION:** If I'm Catholic, am I *required* to pay my taxes to the Catholic school division?

**ANSWER:** Once you state on the tax declaration form that you are Catholic, your taxes must go to the Catholic school division if one exists in your RM or municipality. There is no choice offered. It is legally required by the Saskatchewan Education Act that where two publicly funded school divisions co-exist, property owners who are of the minority Catholic faith pay their taxes to the Catholic school division.

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**QUESTION:** What if I'm Catholic, but my child has gone to a public school for years. Can I direct my taxes to the public school division?

**ANSWER:** Members of the Catholic faith who confirm their faith on their tax declaration forms cannot do this, according to the Education Act. In order for the taxes to be directed to the public school board, individuals would have to state on their tax declaration forms that they are not Catholic. This is essentially a matter of conscience for each taxpayer.

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**QUESTION:** Won't the public school board have less funding if I pay my taxes to the Catholic school board?

**ANSWER:** School boards are funded by a combination of property taxes **and** provincial government grants. These provincial grants increase or decrease depending on the total value of the property the board is allowed to collect taxes on. If a board receives less funding from property taxes, the size of the provincial government grant will change to take this into account.

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**QUESTION:** How are property taxes directed if one property owner is Catholic and one is not?

**ANSWER:** The property taxes can be directed to two different school boards. The amount directed to each board is based on the owner's share in the property and whether the individual declares on the tax declaration form that he or she is Catholic. For example, if a husband and wife are equal, joint owners of their property and one of them is Catholic and confirms that on the form, 50 per cent of the taxes would be paid to the Catholic board and 50 per cent to the public board.