

Nomination of

Cathy Morrow

for the Saskatchewan School Boards Association

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

by the Sun West School Division Board of Education

The Sun West School Division Board of Education is pleased to nominate Cathy Morrow for the Saskatchewan School Boards Association Award of Distinction.

For more than twenty years, Cathy has demonstrated exceptional dedication to public education as an elected trustee, advocate, volunteer, and leader. Her service has extended well beyond the boundaries of Sun West School Division and has had a visible and lasting impact at the provincial level through her work with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA), the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association (SHSAA), and numerous governance and advisory committees. Throughout her tenure, Cathy has consistently championed student success, community engagement, effective governance, and the critical role of publicly elected school board trustees.

Background

Prior to being elected to the Sun West School Division Board of Education, Cathy Morrow was a Trustee with the legacy Outook School Diviison. She was first elected to the Sun West Board in November 2009 for subdivision number 7 (the Town of Outlook), which includes Outlook High School and Outlook Elementary School. She has been re-elected or acclaimed in that subdivision in every election since. During her tenure, she has served as Board Chair and Vice-Chair and has participated in a wide range of division committees, including Audit, Technology, Advocacy, Board Policy Review, CUPE Negotiations, and LINC Negotiations. She has also represented Sun West School Division through extensive involvement with the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association and the West Central District Athletic Association.

From her earliest days as a trustee, Cathy understood that effective school governance requires more than attendance at meetings. It requires being visible in schools, listening to community voices, advocating for students, and ensuring public education remains responsive to the needs of local communities.

Her service reflects a deep belief that every student deserves opportunities to succeed, regardless of geography, circumstance, or background.

Rationale for Nomination

A Champion for Public Education

Throughout her career as a trustee, Cathy has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public education and the communities she serves. According to **Ruth Griffith**, who served alongside Cathy on the Sun West Board of Education from 2006 to 2024, Cathy was always accessible to school staff, families, and community members. When concerns or challenges arose, she ensured issues were addressed and followed through until resolutions were achieved. Griffith recalls Cathy advocating for renovations to improve learning environments at Outlook Elementary School, pursuing repairs following significant storm damage to school facilities, and helping improve community partnerships that benefited students.

Equally important, Cathy has been a visible champion for school communities. She supported fundraising efforts for a new elementary playground in Outlook, attended countless school events, and consistently celebrated the accomplishments of students and staff.

Sue Lytle, who served as a Sun West Trustee from 2016-24, observed:

“Cathy Morrow is dedicated to all things involving the division and the schools.”



Cathy Morrow regularly attends provincial and national professional development opportunities including the Canadian School Boards Association Annual Assembly.



Through out her time as a Trustee, Cathy has been a consistent and vocal advocate for truth and reconciliation.

Lytle describes Cathy as a trustee who attends School Community Council meetings, school assemblies, drama productions, sporting events, and student activities throughout the division. Her presence demonstrates a belief that trustees must remain connected to the students and communities they represent.

In addition to always being available within her own school communities, Cathy is a strong supporter of division initiatives such as the Sun West Student Leadership program, PowerPlay: Youth Entrepreneurship Program and the Science Olympics. She regularly attends the events related to such programs and is always ready to bring greetings and present awards.

Her fellow trustees also appreciate the many times she has been willing to pinch hit for them when they cannot attend events in their own subdivisions. Even though her subdivision is limited to the town of Outlook, she has travelled far and wide, including to many of the division's Hutterite Colony Schools.

Leadership Through Effective Governance

Outstanding trustees demonstrate commitment to governance, accountability, and continuous improvement. Cathy exemplifies each of these qualities.

Over twenty years of service, she has served on numerous board and division committees and consistently approached every responsibility with diligence and professionalism.Reflecting on nearly two decades serving alongside Cathy, Ruth Griffith noted:

"When Cathy arrives at a meeting, she has done her homework."

Griffith described Cathy as exceptionally well prepared, thoughtful in her contributions, and committed to understanding issues in depth before making decisions.

Her colleagues consistently recognize her ability to balance fiscal responsibility with student-centered decision making. Whether reviewing budgets, participating in labour negotiations, or evaluating policy, Cathy approaches governance with integrity and a focus on long-term sustainability.

Former Sun West Board Chair **Karen Itterman**, who served as a trustee from 2006-2009 and again from 2012-2024, recalls that Cathy consistently brought a student-centered perspective to board deliberations.

"At the board table, Cathy always puts students first and continually asks, 'What is best for students?' when trustees are faced with difficult decisions."

Itterman also notes that Cathy exemplifies the qualities of an effective trustee through her preparation and commitment to informed decision-making.

"At the board table, Cathy always puts students first and continually asks, 'What is best for students?'"
Karen Itterman, past Sun West Board Chair



Cathy, pictured here at a Division SCC event with members of her local SCCs, is a dedicated advocate for her local schools and communities.



Cathy is well-known across the province as a tireless advocate for student sport. Pictured above is Cathy with other members of SHSAA Board of Directors.

"In my time as Chair," commented Itterman, "Cathy always came prepared to each board meeting. She had read her board package and was informed on the issues the board needed to discuss."

This consistent focus on students, combined with thorough preparation and thoughtful participation, has made Cathy a respected and trusted contributor to the governance of Sun West School Division.

Her leadership is equally evident through her commitment to professional learning. Cathy has participated in SSBA conventions, conferences, governance sessions, educational technology conferences, and national athletic leadership events. She continually seeks new ideas and best practices that can benefit students, staff, and trustees across Saskatchewan.

A defining characteristic of Cathy's leadership is her commitment to continuous learning and professional development.

Karen Itterman notes that Cathy intentionally seeks out opportunities to expand her knowledge of educational governance and emerging issues affecting Saskatchewan schools.

Itterman stated: "Cathy makes herself available to attend professional development opportunities to keep herself up-to-date on current educational issues," and added that Cathy views professional learning as a responsibility that extends beyond her own growth. "Cathy believes it is very important to report back to the board after attending any professional events."

According to Itterman, Cathy consistently returns from conferences, workshops, and provincial meetings with detailed reports and practical insights that help inform board discussions and decision making. Her commitment ensures that the entire board benefits from the knowledge and perspectives gained through these experiences.

Provincial Impact and Service

Leadership with the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association

While Cathy's service within Sun West School Division has been significant, her influence at the provincial level is particularly noteworthy.

In 2019, Cathy was appointed as the Saskatchewan School Boards Association representative on the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association Board of Directors. Since that time, she has played a key role in supporting school athletics and student opportunities across Saskatchewan.

According to **Dave Sandomirsky,** Executive Director of the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association: "Cathy brought energy and engagement to all the activities

"Cathy brought energy and engagement to all the activities that she was involved in."
Dave Sandomirksy, SHSAA Executive Director



Cathy with other members of the West Central District Athletic Associaiton at the SHSAA Annual Assembly.



Cathy Recieving her SHSAA Service Award from SHSAA Board member Ken Garinger.

that she was involved in. She asked good questions and provided level-headed opinions during discussion. She was fiscally responsible. She verbalized the enjoyment that she gets being part of our Association and her time and effort reflected this joy."

As an SHSAA Board member, Cathy has:

- Participated in extensive board governance meetings throughout the year.
- Served on Finance and Management, and Sport Specific School Programs/Courses committees.
- Chaired the Golf Sport Advisory Group.
- Represented SHSAA at provincial championships in golf, cross-country, soccer, football, volleyball, wrestling, curling, basketball, badminton, and track and field.
- Assisted in organizing and supervising the biennial Women in Sport Conference.
- Participated in professional development through School Sport Canada, the Canadian Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.

Through these contributions, Cathy has strengthened opportunities for thousands of student-athletes across Saskatchewan.

Advocacy Through School Athletics

Cathy's passion for athletics began long before her provincial involvement.

Lance Morrison, past President of the West Central District Athletic Association and longtime coach and athletic leader, notes that Cathy's involvement started by coaching the Outlook Senior Girls Basketball team. Even after her children graduated, she remained deeply involved in education and student programming.

Morrison describes Cathy as a consistent supporter of coaches and athletes who attends events, volunteers where needed, and actively promotes student participation and success. Her work at district and provincial track and field events, where she has volunteered for many years, helping organize operations

"If something needs to be done, you will often find Cathy working behind the scenes to make it happen for students."
Mitch Wintoyk, President of West Central District Athletics



Always the team player, Cathy celebrates with some of her fellow Trustees and senior Sun West administrators as their team emerged victorious during an activity held at a Board retreat.

and logistics, has become a hallmark of her service.

Morrison writes:"Her service, commitment, and leadership have strengthened school athletics at the local, district, and provincial levels."

Current West Central District Athletic Association President **Mitch Wintonyk** similarly highlights Cathy's willingness to contribute behind the scenes:

"If something needs to be done, you will often find Cathy working behind the scenes to make it happen for students."
This commitment to service has earned Cathy the respect of athletes, coaches, administrators, trustees, and educational leaders throughout Saskatchewan.

Karen Itterman emphasizes that Cathy's role as the Saskatchewan School Boards Association representative on the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association Board is much more than a committee assignment. "Her commitment to being the SSBA SHSAA representative is a passion for Cathy."

Through this role, Cathy has attended countless athletic events across Saskatchewan, championing the value of school sport as an integral component of student development. Her presence at championships, tournaments, conferences, and meetings demonstrates her belief that extracurricular opportunities help students develop leadership skills, confidence, resilience, teamwork, and a lifelong commitment to healthy living.

Service to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association

Cathy's provincial leadership extends beyond student athletics.

According to **Jeff McNaughton,** Director of Member Services with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Cathy served as a founding member of the SSBA Employee Benefits Plan Advisory Committee from 2012 to 2024.

The committee played a critical role in providing advice

"Cathy has been a strong advocate for all students in the schools, especially the underdogs."
Sue Lytle, past Sun West Trustee

and guidance regarding the strategic direction and long-term sustainability of the Employee Benefits Plan serving school division employees throughout Saskatchewan.

McNaughton notes that Cathy's engagement and contributions were invaluable in helping shape policies that continue to guide the plan today. He further observes that Cathy remains the longest-serving committee member in the history of the advisory committee.

Her work demonstrated a willingness to listen to diverse perspectives, find common ground, and advocate for solutions that benefit employees while maintaining responsible stewardship of resources.

Advocacy for Students

Cathy has always understood that effective trusteeship begins with students.

Whether advocating for improved learning environments, supporting extracurricular programs, promoting arts education, or standing up for vulnerable learners, she consistently places students at the centre of decision making.

According to Sue Lytle, Cathy has been: "A strong advocate for all students in the schools, especially the underdogs."

Lytle also notes Cathy's commitment to supporting arts and music programming and her advocacy for welcoming and supportive learning environments for all students.

Cathy regularly attends division-wide events including science fairs, heritage celebrations, youth conferences, career fairs, and student leadership activities. These opportunities keep her connected to the experiences, aspirations, and needs of students throughout Sun West School Division.

Beyond governance and provincial service, Cathy has built meaningful relationships within the schools she represents.

Karen Itterman notes that Cathy has dedicated hundreds of hours attending school events, activities, celebrations, and community functions. "Cathy has dedicated many hours attending events at the schools she represented. Staff and students in her schools know who she is and she has built relationships with many of them."

This visibility and accessibility have allowed Cathy to



Ever the servant leader, here we see Cathy helping clean up after the annual Sun West Student Leadership Conference.

remain connected to the daily realities of students, staff, and families. Her relationships throughout the school communities she serves have strengthened trust in local governance and reinforced the importance of having trustees who are actively engaged in the life of their schools.

Cathy Morrow's Contributions to Education

Over more than sixteen years of service, Cathy Morrow has consistently demonstrated:

Leadership
Serving as Board Chair, Vice-Chair, committee member, provincial representative, and respected voice in education governance.

Advocacy
Promoting public education, supporting students, championing school athletics, and ensuring community voices are heard.

Commitment
Attending countless school events, community meetings, provincial conferences, and governance sessions while maintaining a visible presence in schools and communities.

Effective Governance
Approaching decisions thoughtfully, preparing thoroughly, managing resources responsibly, and fostering collaborative decision making.

Professional Growth
Pursuing ongoing learning opportunities and bringing innovative ideas back to benefit the division and province.

Provincial Service
Providing leadership through SHSAA, SSBA, and provincial advisory committees that have influenced educational opportunities and programs across Saskatchewan.

Summary

Since her election in 2009, Cathy Morrow has exemplified what it means to be an outstanding school board trustee. Her contributions have strengthened local schools, enhanced governance within Sun West School Division, advanced provincial educational initiatives, and elevated opportunities for students throughout Saskatchewan.

She is a tireless advocate for public education, a respected leader among her peers, a champion of student athletics and extracurricular opportunities, and a model of service-oriented leadership.

Most importantly, Cathy has never lost sight of why school boards exist: to improve opportunities and outcomes for students.

Through her leadership, integrity, commitment, and provincial impact, Cathy Morrow has clearly demonstrated the qualities the Saskatchewan School Boards Association Award of Distinction was established to recognize.

Cathy Morrow
Board of Education - Service Record

Chair
2011-13

Vice-Chair
2014 - current

Audit Committee
2014-19

CUPE Negotiating Committee
2013-14, 2016-17, 2019-24

LINC Negotiating Committee
2014-15

Board Policy Review Committee
2018-20

Advocacy Committee
2020-24

Technology Committee
2016 - current

SHSAA & WCDAA
2009- current

SUN WEST
SCHOOL DIVISION