

POLICY 3

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate in order to achieve its mission and goals. The oath of office taken by each trustee when he or she assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of education.

The Board is a corporation. The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. A trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the Board by means of written policy or resolution may carry out duties individually, but only as an agent of the Board. In such cases, the actions of the trustee are those of the Board, which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the Division.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The trustee shall:

1. Become familiar with division policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
2. Become familiar with all matters affecting the operation of the jurisdiction's schools.
3. Refer queries, or issues and problems not covered by Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
4. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent.
5. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the trustee's judgment, business experience and familiarity with the community.
6. Participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the Division.
7. Support the decisions of the Board.
8. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
9. Participate in Board/trustee development so the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
10. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
11. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Ethics.

12. Interpret the needs of the community to the Division and the School Division's actions to those we serve.
13. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns prior to a Board decision.
14. The Trustee, upon receiving a complaint or an inquiry from a parent, staff member or community member about operations, will refer the parent, staff member or community member back to the staff member responsible (e.g. teacher, Principal or department) and will inform the Superintendent or designate of this action.
15. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division. Personnel matters are to be brought to the attention of the Superintendent only.
16. Attend Board meetings, and committee meetings as assigned, prepared to participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
17. Recognize his/her fiduciary responsibility to the Division and act in the best interests of the Division understanding that Division needs are paramount.
 - 17.1 Vote on every Board motion, unless there is a conflict of interest.
 - 17.2 Support a majority vote of the Board as if the vote had been unanimous.
18. Develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
19. Liaise with designated School Council(s).
20. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair or, where applicable, to the Vice-Chair.

Orientation

As a result of elections, the Board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate smooth transition from one Board to the next following an election, trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing Board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives, and long-range plans.

The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship. All trustees are strongly encouraged to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

1. The Division will provide an orientation program for all trustees that provides information on:
 - 1.1 Role of the trustee and the Board;
 - 1.2 Board policy, agendas, and minutes;

- 1.3 Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
 - 1.4 Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements, and long-range plans;
 - 1.5 Division programs and services;
 - 1.6 Board's function as an appeal body; and
 - 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest, freedom of information.
2. The orientation program may also include:
 - 2.1 A tour of the offices and the opportunity to meet Division Office staff.
 - 2.2 A tour of the schools and the opportunity to meet the Principals and staff.
 3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the Division's orientation program for trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee with access to the references listed in Policy 3 Appendix at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.
 4. The Division will provide support within the Board governance budget for trustees attending provincial association sponsored orientation seminars.
 5. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about history, functions, policies, procedures, and issues.

Legal Reference: Sections 60, 61, 68, 72, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 246 *School Act*
Section 6 *Commissioner of Oaths Act*

Adopted: August 2004
Reviewed: October 2009
Revised: June 2011
November 2013

SERVICES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO TRUSTEES

Trustees shall be provided with the following services, materials and equipment while in office:

1. Access to the following:
 - The School Act, The Regulations, and related documents
 - Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual
 - Current Division reports and resource material (e.g. Three Year Ed Plan and most recent Accountability Pillar Report) as posted on the Division website
 - School year calendars available through school websites linked through the Division website - outlined from the Board approved differentiated calendar
 - Meeting calendars as determined in the Board Year Plan
 - Names of School Council officials as provided via attendance at respective Ward school council meetings
 - List of Division Office departmental contacts, phone numbers and extensions
 - Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) and Canadian School Board Association (CSBA) membership services

2. Communications/Public Relations:
 - Notification of significant media events, reminders of special meetings
 - Online copies of school newsletters through Division website
 - Speaker's notes/talking points as required or when requested
 - Individual and Board photographs

3. Administrative/Secretarial Services:
 - Conference registration, travel and accommodation arrangements
 - Information Technology service support
 - List of employees in each operational area with contact information

4. Equipment:
 - An electronic device, with appropriate software and access. Upon completion of the term of office, the trustee will have the option to purchase the device from the Board.