



Board 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, goals and values. The oath of office taken by each trustee when they assume office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education.

The Board of Trustees 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 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. The Board may also delegate authority to a committee of the Board as outlined in Policy 8.

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.

Board Orientation

The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship.

1. The Division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected and returning trustees that provides information on:
 - 1.1. Role of the trustee and the Board;
 - 1.2. Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
 - 1.3. Accessing board policy, administrative procedures, agendas and minutes;
 - 1.4. Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 1.5. Division programs and services;
 - 1.6. Program, employee, student and Board evaluation;
 - 1.7. Board's function as an appeal body;
 - 1.8. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest, disqualification, and Code of Conduct; and,

- 1.9. The responsibility of Commissioner of Oath, as an elected official.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend School Board Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the Division's orientation program for newly elected and returning trustees.
4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about functions, policies, procedures and issues.
5. A trustee Handbook will be made available to all trustees.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

1. At the time of assuming office, take and subscribe to the official oath and deposit it with the Secretary-Treasurer.
2. At the time of assuming office, pledge to and sign the Trustee Code of Conduct. Ensure familiarity and adherence to the Trustee Code of Conduct throughout the term.
3. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
4. Refer queries, or issues and problems not covered by Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
5. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint from a parent or community member about school operations, will refer the parent or community member back to the school and will inform the Superintendent of this action. Refer to Administrative Procedure 143 - Dispute Resolution Process for Parents.
6. Participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
7. Support the decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the corporate opinion of the Board when it does not.
8. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
9. Participate, subject to Board approval, in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced. Key learnings will be communicated to the entire Board either verbally, written or electronically.
10. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.

11. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
12. Attend Division and school events when possible.
 - 12.1. Present student and staff recognition awards as required.
13. Report any violation in compliance with the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board during an in-camera session.
14. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the Division.
15. Trustees have the responsibility to bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns. When such concerns conflict with the interests of the Division, Division interests are paramount.
16. Liaise with School Councils.
17. Disclose any pecuniary interest in accordance with Section 88 of the Education Act.

Reference: Education Act, Section 33, 75, 85, 87
Commissioner of Oaths Act, Section 6

Revised: April 22, 2020, June 5, 2013