



ROLE OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

In order to continue Saskatchewan's tradition of education excellence, boards of education need the ideas, energy and commitment of women and men who want to do their best for students and their communities.

Locally elected school boards have a vital role in serving Saskatchewan's publicly-funded education system. The longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of schools boards has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly-funded education.

If you decide to run for election, working as part of a board of education means you care about students, schools and communities. If you want to be part of leading the learning community and building a better community at large, you're taking a great first step!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER IS . . .

COMMITTED

Successful school board members, or trustees, put the needs of the student first all of the time. Trustees run for office because they are committed to making things better for Saskatchewan students.

Boards of education remain deeply rooted in the belief that every child in Saskatchewan, regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances, must have the resources and supports they need to achieve and succeed. Collectively, the women and men who serve on Saskatchewan's school boards are committed to serving children, youth, parents and communities.

School board members, teachers, staff, administrators and Ministry of Education personnel – the "stakeholders in education" – have worked collaboratively and cooperatively to ensure students receive the best education possible. Education is important to our future and together we must address many challenges.



NOT NECESSARILY AN “EDUCATION EXPERT”

In order to serve, one need not be an “education expert”. The ideal school board includes members who are representative of all cultures and walks of life in the community. The role of the trustee is not to serve as a professional educator, or to act as the spokesperson for a particular interest group. Instead, the trustee must, to the best of his or her ability, represent the wishes of all parents, caregivers, students and others in their communities. Diverse backgrounds, experiences and voices can lead to better decisions.

WILLING TO WORK COOPERATIVELY

It is important to realize that a school trustee, acting individually, has no authority to make decisions. A trustee works as part of a team; only the school board in public session has the power to make decisions that affect schools.

An interest in your particular school may have prompted you to seek office. However, as a school trustee you are responsible for all of the schools in the division and school board decisions must be made accordingly. There is no room for “turf wars” in effective school boards. Many groups share an interest in education, however, only school boards have the legal authority and mandate to govern the school system. No other group in society has this responsibility.

AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

The primary role of the school board member is to ensure the wishes of communities are reflected in the management and operation of schools. Trustees must be willing to listen to their communities about what they need and want from their schools. Trustees must also make the effort to ensure their communities are kept up to date on the plans and decisions of the board.

READY TO MAKE THE TIME

Trustees spend an average of six to ten hours per week on school board-related business. This includes board meetings but could also involve serving as a liaison to communities, representing the board at events, serving as the designated spokesperson, serving on committees, taking part in trustee professional development activities, and attending Saskatchewan School Boards Association events.

SUPPORTED BY YOUR PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION

By virtue of the fact that their board is a member of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA), successful candidates also gain access to the services and supports provided by the provincial organization.

For more information about the SSBA services and supports available, please visit:
www.saskschoolboards.ca.



THE SCHOOL BOARD

In Saskatchewan there are different kinds of school divisions: large geographic divisions that combine an urban centre and expansive rural areas; large urban public divisions; the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises; northern school divisions; Roman Catholic separate school divisions; and, a Protestant separate school division. Every division however, is governed by a locally elected board of education.

Trustees, as members of boards of education, have many important responsibilities.

Some of these include...

Establishing the vision, priorities and overall educational plans for the school division by:

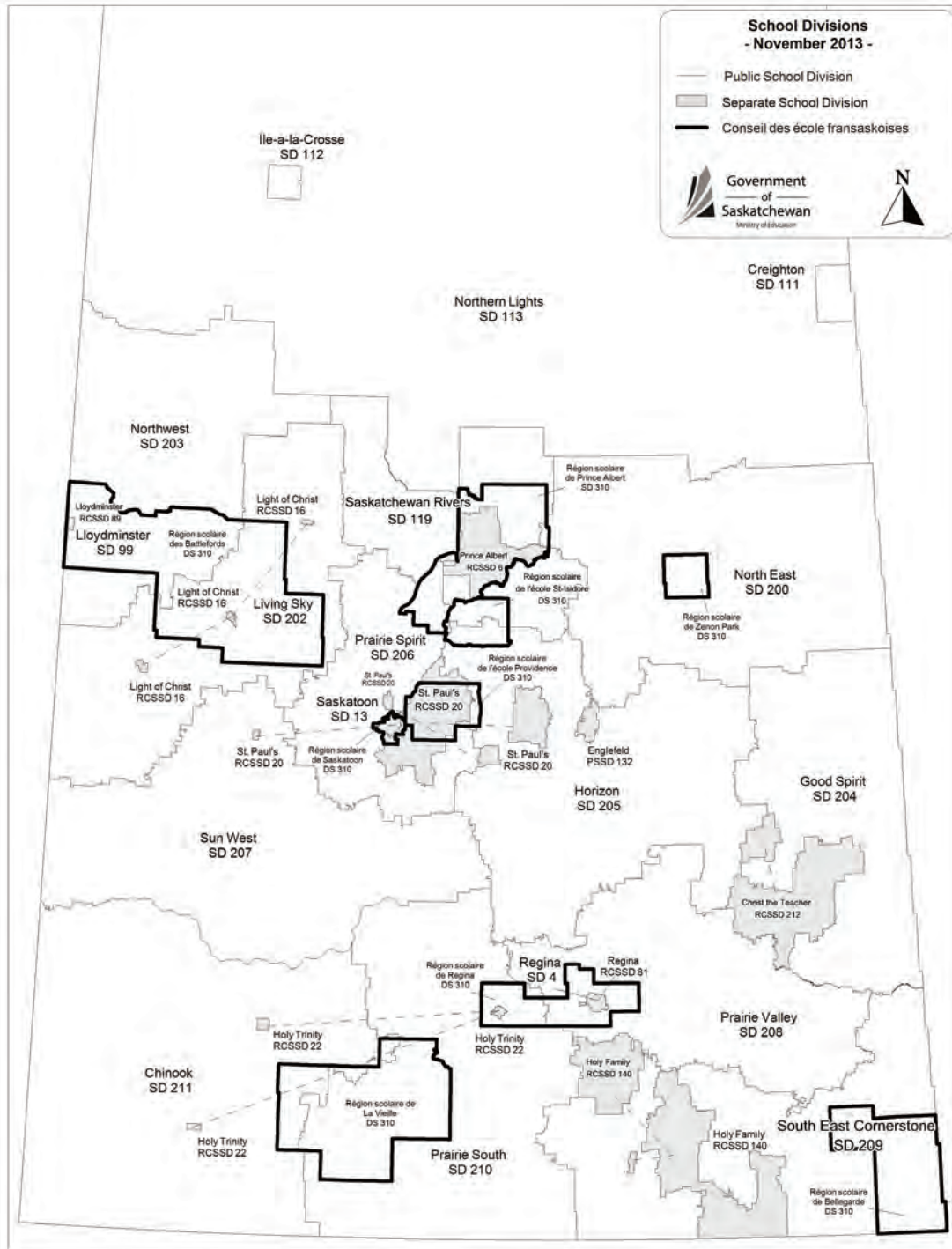
- Approving the educational program for the school division including special programming needs such as practical and applied arts, music and second language instruction.
- Overseeing and holding the division accountable for results.
- Determining financial priorities, adopting the annual budget, and ensuring accountability for school division expenditures.

Establishing the strategic policies of the school division by:

- Maintaining school facilities as healthy and safe places to learn.
- Working with the school division administration and in consultation with parents, caregivers, students, teachers and support staff.
- Supporting positive environments for students and staff.
- Communicating effectively by informing and listening to their communities.
- Advocating for education, ensuring that the educational needs of students are always considered first.



MAP OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS



W
E
R
O
R