

Policy 3

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustees are elected in accordance with the [Local Government Election Act](#). As democratically elected officials, trustees represent the public voice in Prekindergarten to grade 12 educational governance.

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its role in order to achieve its mission, vision, beliefs and commitments. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership.

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 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.

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. The Board Chair will write a letter to accompany the nomination package which outlines the dates and times for orientation sessions, organizational meetings and subsequent meetings in the first month.

1. The Board Chair, Vice-Chair in consultation with the Director will ensure the development and implementation of the Division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. This session will provide information on:
 - 1.1 Role of the trustee, the Board and the Director;
 - 1.2 Delegation of authority to the Director and related accountability mechanisms including CEO evaluation process criteria and timelines;
 - 1.3 Organizational structures and procedures of the Division, and governance tools used by the Board;
 - 1.4 The Board Policy Handbook, agendas and minutes;
 - 1.5 Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 1.6 Division programs and services;
 - 1.7 Board's function as an appeal body; and
 - 1.8 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
 - 1.9 The legacy document and board annual work plan.

New trustees are required to attend the Board developed orientation session(s).

2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Saskatchewan School Boards Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

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. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
3. Refer administrative matters to the Director. 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 Director of this action if administrative action is desired.
4. Keep the Board and the Director informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division.
5. When requested, provide the Director with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
6. Attend meetings of the Board; 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. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns.
8. Accurately communicate the decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the majority decision of the Board when it does not.
9. When delegated responsibility, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
10. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
11. Share the materials and ideas gained from a trustee development activity with fellow trustees at the next available opportunity.
12. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
13. Attend School Community Council meetings as requested and/or when possible.

14. Attend significant Division or school functions when possible.
15. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
16. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair or to the whole board during a closed session following the prescribed process for adding items to the agenda.

Reference: Sections 63, 85, 87, *The Education Act, 1995*
The Local Government Election Act

Approved: May 5, 2014
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