

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 core purpose. The oath of office taken or affirmation made by each trustee when s/he assumes 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. Individual trustees exercise an effective decision making role in the context of corporate action. A trustee who is given authority by Board motion 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. Individual trustees do not have the authority to direct the Division's administration and staff.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

1. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in Board business.
2. Recognize his/her fiduciary responsibility to the Division and act in the best interests of the Division understanding that Division needs are paramount.
 - 2.1 Vote on every Board motion, unless there is a conflict of interest.
 - 2.2 Support a majority vote of the Board as if the vote had been unanimous.
3. Provide for the engagement of parents, students and the community in matters related to education.
4. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns.
5. Refer matters not covered by Board policy, but requiring a corporate decision to the Board for discussion.
6. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent.
7. 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 teacher, Principal or department and will inform the Superintendent or designate of this action.
8. 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.

9. 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.
10. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined terms of reference in a responsible and effective way.
11. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
12. Be cognizant of provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
13. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow trustees at a Board meeting following a trustee development activity.
14. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
15. Attend School Council meetings as a Board representative upon invitation, when possible.
16. Attend the annual Council of School Councils (COSC) meeting.
17. Attend, when possible, Division functions/events.
18. Attend extra-curricular school activities, including graduations, when designated or formally invited as Board representative.
19. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
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 expected to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

1. In the year of an election, the Division will host a preliminary orientation session for all elected candidates prior to the Organizational Meeting which will include a review of and an expression of interest in Board assignments and committees.
2. The Division will offer an orientation program for all trustees that provides information on:
 - 2.1. Role of the trustee and the Board;

- 2.2. Board policy, agendas and minutes;
 - 2.3. Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
 - 2.4. Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 2.5. Division programs and services;
 - 2.6. Board's function as an appeal body;
 - 2.7. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest;
 - 2.8. Trustee remuneration and expenses.
3. The orientation program may also include:
 - 3.1. A tour of the offices and the opportunity to meet Division Office staff.
 - 3.2. A tour of the schools and the opportunity to meet Principals and staff.
 4. 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.
 5. The Division will provide support within the Board governance budget for trustees attending provincial association sponsored orientation seminars.
 6. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

Legal Reference: Section 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

Reviewed: Policy Review Committee – February 24, 2015