

Board Policy 3

Role of the Trustee

The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the work of the Board as it carries out its mandate to govern and achieve its vision, mission, beliefs, values, and principles. 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.

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. In alignment with Board engagement efforts, provide for the engagement of parents, students and the community in matters related to education.
 - 2.1 Bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns prior to a Board decision.
 - 2.2 Interpret the needs of the community to the Board and the Board's actions to those served.
 - 2.3 Liaise with designated School Council(s).
3. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. Upon receiving a concern from a parent or community member about operations, refer the parent or community member to the appropriate school or department and inform the Superintendent of this action, or directly refer the matter to the Superintendent.
4. Keep the Superintendent and the Board Chair informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the Division.
5. Respect the confidentiality and protocol of personnel matters.

6. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, providing the benefit of the Trustee's judgment, experience, and familiarity with the community.
7. Refer queries or issues and problems not covered by Board policy or Administrative Procedure, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
8. Attend Board meetings; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board.
9. 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.
10. When delegated responsibility by the Board, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
11. Participate in Board/Trustee development sessions so that quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
12. Stay current with respect to provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.
13. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow Trustees following a Trustee development activity.
14. Contribute to a positive and respectful learning and working culture, both within the Board and the Division.
15. Attend Division, school, and community functions when appropriate.
16. Attend annual school visits.
17. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair, or where applicable, to the Vice-Chair.

Board 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.

1. The Division Board will offer an orientation program for all 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 Board policy, 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 Board's function as an appeal body;
 - 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest; and
 - 1.8 Commissioner for Oaths.
2. The Board will approve Trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association, Public School Boards Association of Alberta and/or Alberta Education orientation sponsored events.
3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the Division's orientation program for Trustees.
 - 3.1 The Superintendent shall provide each Trustee with access to the references listed in Policy 3 Appendix A – Services, Materials and Equipment Provided to Trustees at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.
 - 3.2 The Board Policy Handbook, the Trustee Handbook, and the Administrative Procedures Manual are available on the Division website for Trustees.

Reference: Sections 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96 - Education Act
Section 6 - Commissioner for Oaths Act

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Appendix A – Services, Materials and Equipment Provided to Trustees

Trustees shall be provided with the following services, materials, and equipment from within the Board governance budget while in office:

1. Reference Access

- 1.1 The Education Act, the Regulations, and related documents
- 1.2 Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual
- 1.3 Current Division documents:
 - 1.3.1 Budget
 - 1.3.2 Capital Plan
 - 1.3.3 Three Year Education Plan/Annual Education Results Report
 - 1.3.4 Collective Agreements
 - 1.3.5 Audited Financial Statements
- 1.4 School year and meeting calendars
- 1.5 Current telephone listings of schools and principals

2. Communications/Public Relations

- 2.1 Notification of significant media events
- 2.2 Name tags, business cards and lapel pins
- 2.3 Key messages as required
- 2.4 Board photographs

3. Administrative/Secretarial Services through the Superintendent

- 3.1 Access to inter-office mail
- 3.2 Conference registration, travel, and accommodation arrangements
- 3.3 E-mail address and service support
- 3.4 Photocopying and related secretarial services
- 3.5 Coordination of events sponsored by the Board

4. Equipment

Laptop computer or equivalent with appropriate software and access.

Reference: Sections 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 222 - Education Act