

Board Policy 7

Board Operations

The Board believes that its ability to discharge its obligations in an efficient and effective manner is dependent upon the development and implementation of a sound organization design. In order to discharge its responsibilities to the electorate, the Board shall hold meetings as often as is necessary.

The Board believes that its fundamental obligation is to preserve and enhance the public's trust in education, and in the affairs of its operations, be consistent with its objective to encourage the general public to contribute to the educational process. Consequently, the Board believes its affairs must be conducted in public to the greatest extent possible.

1. Organizational Meeting

An Organizational Meeting of the Board shall be held annually, and no later than four (4) weeks following the date of the statement of election results when there has been a general election. The first meeting of the Board following a general election shall be an Organizational Meeting. The Secretary-Treasurer or designate will give notice of the Organizational Meeting to each Trustee as if it were a Special Meeting. The Organizational Meeting during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of the term shall be held on the first Board meeting date in September.

Each Trustee will take the Oath of Office or make an affirmation immediately following the call to order of the Organizational Meeting after a general election. Special provisions will be made for a Trustee taking office following a by-election.

Agenda for Organizational Meeting

- 1.1 The Secretary-Treasurer shall call the meeting to order and act as Chair of the meeting for the purpose of the election of the Board Chair.
- 1.2 Upon election as Chair, the Board Chair shall take the Oath of Office or make an affirmation and preside over the remainder of the Organizational Meeting. Vote to elect the Board Chair shall be by secret ballot.
- 1.3 Voting to elect the Vice-Chair shall be by secret ballot. Upon election as Vice-Chair, the Vice-Chair shall take the Oath of Office or make an affirmation.
- 1.4 Establish a schedule -- date, time, and place for Regular Board Meetings and any additional required meetings for the ensuing year.
- 1.5 Appoint Trustees to the standing committees of the Board.

- 1.6 Appoint Trustees to the organizations or agencies where the Board has regular representation.
- 1.7 Establish rates of honoraria, benefit plans, and expense reimbursement for Trustees.
- 1.8 Review Trustee conflict of interest stipulations and determine any disclosure of Pecuniary Interest (Section 85, Education Act).
- 1.9 Affirm Trustee attendance representation at school council meetings.
- 1.10 Address other organizational items as required.

2. Meetings of the Board

The schedule for Regular Board Meetings shall be as established at the Organizational Meeting.

- 2.1 Meetings will ordinarily be held in the Division Office in Whitecourt.
- 2.2 Notwithstanding the schedule noted in 2., the Board may, by resolution, alter the schedule in such manner as it deems appropriate.
- 2.3 Trustees shall notify the Board Chair, or the Vice-Chair, if they are unable to attend a Regular Board Meeting.
- 2.4 A Trustee unable to be physically present may participate in a meeting by electronic means or other forms of communication facilities if the electronic means or other communication facilities enable the Trustees participating in the meeting and members of the public attending the meeting to hear each other.
- 2.5 Trustees participating in a meeting of the Board by electronic means or other communication facilities are deemed to be present at the meeting.
- 2.6 It is the responsibility of the Trustee to make all necessary arrangements to participate electronically in the meeting.
- 2.7 Trustees who are absent from three (3) or more consecutive regularly scheduled meetings shall:
 - 2.7.1 obtain authorization by resolution of the Board to do so; or
 - 2.7.2 provide to the Board Chair evidence of illness in the form of a medical certificate respecting the period of absence.

Failure to attend may result in disqualification in accordance with the Education Act.

- 2.8 If both the Chair or Vice-Chair, through illness or other cause, are unable to perform the duties of the office or are absent, the Board shall appoint from among its members an acting Chair, who, on being so appointed, has all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the Chair during the Chair's and Vice-Chair's absence or inability to act.
- 2.9 Regular Board Meetings will not be held without the Superintendent and/or designate(s) in attendance unless the Superintendent's contract is being discussed.
- 2.10 It shall be the responsibility of the Trustee in a conflict of interest to absent themselves from the meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act and ensure that their declaration and absence is properly recorded within the minutes.
- 2.11 A quorum, which is a simple majority of the number of Trustees, must be present for every duly constituted meeting.

3. Special Meetings

Occasionally, unanticipated, or emergent issues require immediate Board attention and/or action.

- 3.1 Special Meetings of the Board will only be called when the Chair, the majority of Trustees, or the Minister is of the opinion that an issue must be dealt with before the next Regular Board Meeting.
- 3.2 A notice of the Special Meeting including date, time, place, and nature of business shall be issued to all Trustees in accordance with the Education Act, Sections 3 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5).
- 3.3 The nature of the business to be transacted must be clearly specified in the notice of the meeting. Unless all Trustees are present at the Special Meeting, no other business may be transacted. Items can be added to the agenda only by the unanimous consent of the entire Board.
- 3.4 Special Meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, recognizing that specific agenda matters may be held in closed session.
- 3.5 Special Meetings of the Board will not be held without the Superintendent and/or designate in attendance unless the Superintendent's contract is being discussed.

4. Closed Sessions

The Board may, by resolution, move into a closed session for the purpose of discussing land, labour, legal, student, and/or matters governed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act).

5. Agenda for Regular Board Meetings

The Board Chair, with the assistance of the Vice-Chair, is responsible for preparing an agenda for Regular Board Meetings in consultation with the Superintendent.

5.1 The order of business at a Regular Board Meeting shall generally be as follows:

- 5.1.1 Call to Order and Roll Call
- 5.1.2 National Anthem
- 5.1.3 Truth and Reconciliation Statement
- 5.1.4 Additions/Deletions to the Agenda
- 5.1.5 Acceptance of the Agenda
- 5.1.6 Acceptance of the Minutes (Regular, Special and Organizational Meetings)
- 5.1.7 Time Specific Delegations
- 5.1.8 Time Specific Staff/Administration Reports and Presentations
- 5.1.9 Board Committee Reports
- 5.1.10 Action Items
- 5.1.11 Information and Reports
- 5.1.12 Topics for Future Discussions
- 5.1.13 Requests for Information from Administration by Board Motion
- 5.1.14 Meeting Highlights
- 5.1.15 Closed Session (Land, Legal, Labour, Student Matters)
- 5.1.16 Adjournment

5.2 The Board will follow the order of business set by the agenda unless the order is altered, or new items are added by agreement of the Board.

5.3 The agenda will be supported by copies of policies, letters, reports, contracts, and other materials as are pertinent to the business that will come before the Board and will be of value to the Board in the performance of its duties. Each action item will include a recommendation.

5.4 Items may be placed on the agenda in one of the following ways:

- 5.4.1 By notifying the Board Chair or Superintendent at least six (6) calendar days prior to the Board meeting.
- 5.4.2 By notice of motion at the previous meeting of the Board.
- 5.4.3 As a request from a committee of the Board.

- 5.4.4 Issues that require Board action may arise after the agenda has been prepared. The Board Chair, at the beginning of the meeting, shall ask for additions to and/or deletions from the agenda prior to agenda approval.
- 5.4.5 Trustees who request an item for a closed session shall discuss the nature of the item with the Board Chair before the meeting.
- 5.5 The agenda package, with supporting information, shall normally be provided to each Trustee at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting.
- 5.6 The list of agenda items shall be posted on the Division website no later than 10:00 a.m. on the day prior to the meeting and printed copies be available in the Division Office. Any elector may inspect the agenda and request a copy.
- 5.7 During the course of the meeting the Board may, by resolution, amend the agenda.
- 5.8 At the discretion of the Board Chair, routine processes may be approved by unanimous consent.

6. Minutes for Regular Board or Special Meetings

The Board shall maintain and preserve by means of minutes a record of its proceedings and resolutions.

- 6.1 The minutes shall record:
 - 6.1.1 date, time and place of meeting;
 - 6.1.2 type of meeting;
 - 6.1.3 name of Chair;
 - 6.1.4 names of those Trustees, administration, and recording secretary in attendance;
 - 6.1.5 approval of preceding minutes;
 - 6.1.6 all resolutions, including the Board's disposition of the same, placed before the Board, entered in full;
 - 6.1.7 where deemed appropriate, a statement of context, preceding motions, and a brief summary of the presentations or information items placed before the Board;
 - 6.1.8 points of order and appeals;
 - 6.1.9 appointments;
 - 6.1.10 attached reports of committees;
 - 6.1.11 recording of the vote on a motion (when requested pursuant to the Education Act); and
 - 6.1.12 Trustee declaration pursuant to the Education Act.

- 6.2 The minutes shall:
 - 6.2.1 be reviewed by the Secretary-Treasurer and Board Chair prior to submission to the Board;
 - 6.2.2 be considered an unofficial record of proceedings until such time as adopted by a resolution of the Board; and
 - 6.2.3 upon adoption by the Board, be deemed to be the official and sole record of the Board's business.
 - 6.2.4 A record of the approved minutes and supporting documentation will be available on the Division's website.
- 6.3 The Superintendent shall ensure, upon acceptance by the Board, that appropriate initials are appended to each page of the minutes, and that appropriate signatures and the corporate seal of the Division are affixed to the concluding page of the minutes.
- 6.4 The Superintendent shall establish a codification system for resolutions determined by the Board which will:
 - 6.4.1 provide for ready identification as to the meeting at which it was considered; and
 - 6.4.2 establish and maintain a file of all Board minutes.
- 6.5 The Superintendent shall ensure effective and appropriate procedures for the prompt dissemination of information about decisions made at all Board meetings.
- 6.6 The Superintendent shall ensure the approved minutes of a Regular Board or Special Meeting are posted to the website as soon as possible following approval.

7. Motions

- 7.1 Motions do not require a seconder.
- 7.2 All new business items will be decided by resolution.
- 7.3 Notice of Motion

The notice of motion serves the purpose of officially putting an item on the agenda of the next or future Regular Board Meeting and gives notice to all Trustees of the item to be discussed. A notice of motion is not debatable and may not be voted on.

7.4 Discussion on Motions

The custom of addressing comments to the Board Chair is to be followed by all persons in attendance.

A Board motion or a recommendation from administration must generally be placed before the Board prior to any discussion taking place on an issue. Once a motion is before the Board and until it is passed or defeated, all speakers shall confine their remarks to the motion or to the information pertinent to the motion. Motions may be submitted by any Trustee, including the Board Chair.

7.5 Separation of Question

When the question under consideration contains distinct propositions, the vote of each proposition shall be taken separately, should any member so request.

7.6 Speaking to the Motion

The mover of a motion first, and every Trustee, shall have an opportunity to speak to the motion before any Trustee is allowed to speak a second time.

The mover of the motion is permitted to close debate on the motion.

As a general guide, a Trustee should not speak for longer than five (5) minutes on any motion. The Board Chair has the responsibility to limit the discussion by a Trustee when such a discussion is repetitive or digresses from the topic at hand, or where discussion takes place prior to the acceptance of a motion.

No one shall interrupt a Trustee, unless it is to ask for important clarification of the Trustee's remarks, and any such interruption shall not be permitted without permission of the Board Chair.

Amendments to the motion may be proposed at any time during discussion. No more than two (2) amendments may be before the meeting at one time. Discussion and voting on motions and amendments takes place in reverse order of their proposal.

Motions or amendments may be withdrawn only with the unanimous consent of the Trustees.

Should a Trustee arrive at the meeting after a motion has been made and prior to taking a vote, the Trustee may request further discussion prior to the vote. The Board Chair shall rule on further discussion.

7.7 Reading of the Motion

A Trustee may require the motion under discussion to be read at any time during the debate, except when a Trustee is speaking.

7.8 Recorded Vote

Whenever a Trustee requests a recorded vote, before the vote is taken, the minutes shall record the names of the Trustees who voted for or against the matter.

Immediately after a vote is taken and on the request of a Trustee, the minutes shall record the name of that Trustee and whether that Trustee voted for or against the matter or abstained through resolution (in accordance with the Education Act).

7.9 Required Votes

The Board Chair, and all Trustees present, unless excused by resolution of the Board or by the provisions of the Education Act, shall vote on each question. Each question shall be decided by a majority of the votes of those Trustees present. In the case of equality of votes, the question is defeated. A vote on a question shall be taken by open vote, expressed by show of hands.

7.10 Debate

In all debate, any matter of procedure in dispute shall be settled, if possible, by reference to Robert's Rules of Order. If this reference is inadequate, procedure may be determined by motion supported by the majority of Trustees in attendance.

A 'point of order' may be called by any Trustee at any time. The 'point of order' must be stated definitively and conclusively. The Board Chair decides, without debate, whether the 'point' is well taken.

Any Trustee may appeal a ruling of the Chair. The Trustee states the reasons for the appeal and the Board Chair states the reason for the ruling. There is no debate. The Board Chair then asks, "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?" A simple majority decides the appeal.

A rejected motion is not to be re-introduced during the same meeting unless at least a majority of the Trustees present approve a motion "That the question be reconsidered". This motion is not debatable and calls for an immediate vote.

8. Delegations to Board Meetings

The Board welcomes delegations to provide information of educational concern. The Board believes having members of the public make presentations at Board meetings can enhance public engagement.

- 8.1 Delegations are limited to the Board's stakeholders.
- 8.2 A delegation requesting to have an item placed on the agenda shall submit to the Superintendent a summary of the presentation and any slides/materials, a minimum of six (6) days prior to the meeting.
- 8.3 The Board Chair, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall determine if the proposed item is to be placed on the agenda.
- 8.4 Understanding that emergent items do arise, a delegation may request to place a presentation on the agenda with less than six days' notice upon approval of the Board/Board Chair.
- 8.5 If the item is placed on the agenda, the Superintendent shall inform the delegation of the time and place of the appointment and applicable Board policy regarding the presentation.
- 8.6 Delegations shall normally make presentations at Regular Board Meetings.
- 8.7 The delegation shall observe the rules of parliamentary decorum.
- 8.8 If a delegation's content violates human rights legislation or the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), a portion or all of the delegation's session may be excluded from the posted recording of the meeting.
- 8.9 Comments with respect to the following issues will **not** be allowed:
 - 8.9.1 the security of the property of the Division;
 - 8.9.2 personal information of an individual, including but not limited to a student or an employee of the Division;
 - 8.9.3 a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of property by or for the Division;
 - 8.9.4 labour relations or employee negotiations;
 - 8.9.5 a law enforcement matter, litigation, or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals affecting the Division;
 - 8.9.6 the consideration of a request for access for information under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP).
- 8.10 The delegation will name one person as spokesperson for the group.

- 8.11 The delegation shall make its presentation within a period of fifteen (15) minutes, or as determined by the Board Chair.
- 8.12 Upon completion of the presentation, the Board Chair shall allow Trustee questions for a period of fifteen (15) minutes or as determined by the Board Chair in order to clarify the issues and/or explain policy. At no time during the presentation, shall any Trustee voice their opinion thereon nor shall they by any statement commit the Board to any specific course of action.

9. Audio/Video Recording

The Division electronic recordings of Board Meetings shall be posted online for a period of three (3) months, at which point those recordings shall be deleted online and from Division files.

10. Trustee Compensation and Expenses

The Board believes that Trustees must be appropriately compensated for fulfilling their responsibility. As compensation for the responsibility of an elected Trustee, the Board will pay the Trustee's honorarium as per Appendix A. Questions related to the propriety of an expense claim shall be directed to the Board Chair.

Trustees shall submit claims for honoraria and expenses on the following basis:

- 10.1 For attendance, Trustees shall be paid an hourly rate as defined in Appendix A.
- 10.2 When attending an overnight/multi-day event, normally Trustees will claim a maximum of 12 hours for each 24-hour conference day.
- 10.3 If a Trustee must use part of the day to travel to a conference, but has no other Board business to attend, then Trustees will only claim those hours needed to reach their destination.
- 10.4 On days when Trustees will be travelling to a Board approved function (e.g., a Zone 2/3 meeting in Edmonton), Trustees will include their time travelling to and from their destination, as well as time spent on Board business, on their monthly expense claim form.
- 10.5 Trustees who are elected or appointed by the Board to the governing bodies of other out-of-Division organizations may submit a claim on the following basis:
 - 10.5.1 at the rate paid by the Board if the honoraria and/or allowance is not paid by the other organization; or
 - 10.5.2 at the rate paid by the Board minus any honoraria and/or allowance to be received from the other organization if the total amount is less than that paid by the Board. The breakdown between honoraria and allowance to be received from the other organization is to be indicated on the claim form.

10.6 Trustees may submit claims for the following:

- 10.6.1 Board/Committee meetings and workshops.
- 10.6.2 School Council meetings and other appropriate school functions.
- 10.6.3 Meetings with municipalities.
- 10.6.4 Community meetings as approved by the Board/Chair.
- 10.6.5 ASBA, PSBAA, and Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards general meetings.
- 10.6.6 Alberta Rural Education Symposium.
- 10.6.7 Meetings and events by invitation of the Superintendent.
- 10.6.8 Attendance at other meetings and events by Board approval.

10.7 Reimbursement of kilometrage and out-of-pocket expenses:

Reimbursement of expenditures incurred while traveling on Board business within Alberta shall be made as follows:

- 10.7.1 travel will normally be by automobile, with transportation costs paid at the rate established at the Organizational Meeting and by the most direct and safest route.
- 10.7.2 airfare as per receipt.
- 10.7.3 parking costs as per receipt.
- 10.7.4 accommodation costs as per receipt, or in lieu of an accommodation receipt, a private accommodation allowance as per Appendix A.
- 10.7.5 approved registration fees.
- 10.7.6 meal allowance at the established rate.

The Board must approve Trustee travel outside of Alberta.

10.8 Communication Allowance

The Board shall compensate Trustees for internet, cell phone, and other technology use, to be claimed under a communication allowance as per Appendix A.

10.9 Benefit Plans

- 10.9.1 Trustees are extended the option of participating in applicable benefit plans approved by the Board, at Board approved rates.
- 10.9.2 Trustees who are ineligible for current benefit plans and health spending accounts shall be reimbursed the cost of a benefit plan and health spending account currently available to other Trustees and Division staff.

10.10 Trustee Honoraria/Expense Claim

10.10.1 Trustees shall submit supporting documents to verify their claims.

10.10.2 The Superintendent or designate shall refer claims requiring clarification to the Board Chair.

10.11 Taxation Matters

The Superintendent shall develop and maintain Administrative Procedures relating to the expense claim form.

10.12 Public Disclosure

The Board shall post a detailed summary of Trustee expense reports on the Northern Gateway Public Schools website on a monthly basis (Board Motion 4665-22) for a period of three months.

11. Board Self-Evaluation

The Board shall determine annually the extent and necessity of a Board Self-Evaluation Process.

References:

Sections 60, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 80, 81, 82, 83, 145, 261, 262
Education Act, Local Authorities Elections Act, Income Tax Act (Canada)
NGSD By-Law No. 4-20 Electoral Wards