

Policy 3

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustees are elected in accordance with the Local Government Act.

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate in order to achieve its vision and goals related to student success and the development of an improved learning environment. The oath of office taken by each trustee when he or she assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education.

The School Act gives no individual authority to trustees. As members of the corporate Board, trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the Board, and for the delivery and quality of educational services. A trustee must serve the community, including Indigenous communities and First Nations on whose traditional territories our schools operate, as an elected representative, but the trustee's primary task is to act as a member of a corporate Board.

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 District.

Trustees bring a range of skills, experience, knowledge, values, beliefs and opinions to their role. Their background does not necessarily include teaching, administration, or any other aspect of education. Their diversity ensures that Board processes are truly democratic and contributes to good decision-making. This diversity also helps trustees provide a balance between the interests of a broader community and the interests of those involved in the delivery of education.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The trustee shall:

1. Become familiar with District 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. 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 District Office personnel and will inform the Superintendent or designate of this action.

4. Keep the Board and the Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the District.
5. Provide the Superintendent 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 District.
7. Attend committee meetings or meetings as a Board representative, as assigned, and report to the Board in a timely manner.
8. Support the decisions of the Board and monitor progress to ensure decisions are implemented.
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 District can be enhanced.
11. Share the materials and ideas gained from a trustee development activity with fellow trustees at the next available opportunity.
12. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
13. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the District.
14. Act as a liaison to assigned schools for the following purposes:
 - 14.1 To provide increased opportunity for trustees to become more knowledgeable about the District's schools;
 - 14.2 To act on behalf of the Board when a Board representative is desired at school functions;
 - 14.3 To provide opportunity for increased communication between trustees and residents of the community, including Indigenous communities and First Nations on whose traditional territories our schools operate.
15. Attend District or school functions when invited and when possible.
16. Continue to carry out duties with integrity and responsibility during an election period.
17. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
18. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board during a closed session.

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.

1. The District will offer an orientation program for all newly elected trustees that provides information on:
 - 1.1 Role of the trustee and the Board;
 - 1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the District;
 - 1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
 - 1.4 Professional learning in the areas of equity, unconscious bias and racism;
 - 1.5 Existing District initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 1.6 District programs and services;
 - 1.7 Board's function as an appeal body;
 - 1.8 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest; and
 - 1.9 Trustee remuneration and expenses.
2. The District will provide financial support for trustees to attend British Columbia School Trustees Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for ensuring the developing and implementing of the District's orientation program for trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee with the Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.
4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about history, functions, policies and procedures.

Legal Reference: Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85 School Act
Local Government Act

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Policy 3 – Appendix

SERVICES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO TRUSTEES

Trustees shall be provided with the following services and materials while in office:

1. Reference

Access to:

- The School Act, the Regulations and related documents
- Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual
- Current District documents
 - Budget
 - Strategic Plan
 - Capital Plan
 - Collective Agreements
 - Audited Financial Statements
- School year and meeting calendars
- District directory
- British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) and Canadian School Board Association (CSBA) membership services

2. Communications/Public Relations

- News clipping service
- Copy of newsletters
- Notification of significant media events, reminders of special meetings
- Name tags, business cards and lapel pins
- Key messages as required
- Individual and Board photographs

3. Administrative Support

- Electronic communication support
 - The District will establish one (1) generic trustee email account for all trustees.
 - The Superintendent or designate will monitor this account daily, acknowledge receipt of messages and inform the sender that a response will be forwarded within ten (10) working days.
 - The Superintendent or designate will forward correspondence to the appropriate person to draft a response, as required.
 - Sensitive or confidential material will be sent to trustee's personal email accounts but will be password protected.
- Personal email account and technology support
- Conference registration, travel and accommodation arrangements

4. Equipment

- A laptop with appropriate software and internet access

Note: The equipment shall be returned to the Board upon completion of the term in office

Legal Reference: Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85 School Act
Local Government Act