



POLICY 03
ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

The role of the trustee is to actively participate as part of the Board as it carries out its mandate to govern and achieve its vision, mission, beliefs and values and principles. The oath of office taken 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. 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.

1. The Division will offer an orientation program for all trustees that provide 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; and

- 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association and Public School Boards Association of Alberta sponsored seminars and orientation events.
 - 2.1 The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta Education sponsored trustee workshops or information sessions.
3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the Division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee with access to the Education Act. The Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual are available on the division web page for trustees.
4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, function, policies, procedures and issues.

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. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint from a parent or community member about operations, will refer the parent or community member back to the school or department and will inform the Superintendent of this action.
3. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division.
4. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, providing the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
5. Refer queries or issues and problems not covered by Board policy or Administrative Procedure, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
6. Attend meetings of the Board; participate in, and contribute to, the decision of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
7. 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.
8. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.

9. Participate, subject to Board approval, in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
10. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
11. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow trustees following a trustee development activity or meetings in a timely manner.
12. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
13. Attend Division or school functions when possible.
14. Become familiar with, and adhere to Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Ethics.
15. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Ethics to the Board during an in-camera session. If practical, the issue should first be reported to the Board Chair.

Legal Reference: Section 60, 61, 68, 246 School Act
Section 51, 52, 53, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 77 of the Education Act (proclaimed)
Section 6, Commissioner of Oaths Act

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