

Policy 3 – ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustees are elected in accordance with the Local Government Elections Act.

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate in order to achieve its mission and goals. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership.

The Board 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 newly elected 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 and Strategic 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 Saskatchewan School Boards Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The Board Chair and Director are responsible for developing the Division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. The Director is responsible for implementing the Division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. The Director shall provide each trustee with access to the Board Policy Handbook and the 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 the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The trustee shall:

1. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in Board business.
2. Plan to spend an average of 6-10 hours per week on board-related business. This includes board meetings but could also involve serving as a liaison to communities, representing the board at events, serving as the designated spokesperson, serving on committees, taking part in trustee professional development activities and attending Saskatchewan School Boards Association events.
3. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
4. Refer administrative matters to the Director or designate. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint from a parent or community member about school operations, will refer the parent or community member back to the school and will inform the Director or designate of this action.
5. Keep the Board and the Director or designate informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division.
6. Provide the Director or designate with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
7. 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 Division.
8. Accurately communicate the decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the majority decision of the Board when it does not.
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 Division 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 relevant provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.

13. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
14. Attend significant Division or school functions when possible, including a minimum of one SCC meeting annually.
15. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
16. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board during an in-camera session.
 - a. Trustees shall demonstrate respect and professionalism in all communications, including digital and social media, correspondence with stakeholders, and internal board dialogue. Trustees must speak with one voice once a decision is made and channel any public communication through the Board Chair.
 - b. Trustees are expected to address interpersonal conflict constructively, utilizing mediation or the Board Chair/Director when appropriate, and maintaining decorum in meetings.
 - c. Any breach of Policy 3 or the Code of Conduct will be handled under the process described in Policy 4. The Board Chair is responsible for facilitating early, respectful intervention before escalation.

Reference: Sections 85, 87 Education Act
Local Government Elections Act, 2015