

Policy 7 – BOARD OPERATIONS

1. Purpose

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. The Board of Education governs with transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

The board holds the fundamental responsibility to maintain and build upon the public's trust in education in its activities. Every meeting of the Board is open to the public, but the board may determine, by resolution, that any matter should be dealt with in closed session and, on making that resolution, the Board may deal with the matter in closed session. The Board supports transparency in its affairs. The board has a duty under The Local Authority Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act (LAFOIP) to protect an individual's privacy and has obligations to maintain confidential information and records as permitted under Part III of LAFOIP. These matters may be addressed by the board in a closed session.

2. Board Composition & Elections

2.1. The Board consists of 11 elected trustees, as established by Ministerial Order. Elections follow The Local Government Election Act and are four-year terms.

2.2. Candidate information packages include:

- 2.2.1. The most recent Annual Report of the Board.
- 2.2.2. The most recent Auditor's report.
- 2.2.3. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association Handbook.
- 2.2.4. A copy of the nomination package.
- 2.2.5. The Board Policy Manual
- 2.2.6. The Division's Administrative Procedures Manual.
- 2.2.7. The Division's most recent Strategic Plan.

2.3. Electors will provide a Criminal Record, no more than six months old, to the Returning Officer with candidacy forms, as outlined in Section 67(6)(f) of The Local Government Election Act, 2015. Any person charged with an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada; hybrid or indictable, or with an offence outlined in The Education Act, 1995 and related regulations are not eligible to take office as a Trustee of the Northwest School Division Board.

3. Organizational Meeting

- 3.1. Held annually by November 30. In election years, it must be held within 30 days of election results.
- 3.2. In an election year, the Director of Education shall call for and receive the duly signed Declarations of Office and corresponding Endorsement Certificates by Commissioners for Oaths from each trustee, in accordance with Section 71 of The Education Act, 1995.
 - 3.2.1. The Director of Education shall proceed to conduct the election of the Board Chair.
 - 3.2.2. Nominations shall be made by the trustees for the office of Chair and need not be seconded.
 - 3.2.3. The Director of Education shall make three (3) calls for nomination.
 - 3.2.4. A vote upon the nominees shall be taken by secret ballot and read aloud when tallying the final count(s).
 - 3.2.5. The nominee who receives the majority of votes of the trustees present shall therefore be declared elected.
 - 3.2.6. Where, on the addition of votes, two (2) or more candidates for the position of Board Chair have an equal number of votes, the Director shall follow the tie vote procedure specified in The Local Government Election Act.
 - 3.2.7. In the event that only one (1) trustee has indicated willingness to serve as Board Chair, that trustee shall be declared elected by acclamation.
- 3.3. The Board Chair shall assume office and shall immediately proceed with the election of the Vice-Chair following the procedure noted above.
- 3.4. The newly elected Board Chair shall then proceed with the agenda as presented by the Director of Education and adopted by the Board. Business includes election of Chair and Vice-Chair; approval of meeting schedule; trustee compensation; committees; designation of signing and borrowing authority; and review of conflict-of-interest rules.

4. Meetings of the Board

- 4.1. Regular Meetings: At least nine per year; in person attendance encouraged, virtual option also available.
- 4.2. Special Meetings: May be held at any time according to Section 33 of The School Division Administration Regulations. Called by the Chair or three trustees with proper notice.
- 4.3. Electronic Meetings: Allowed under The Education Act with secure access, public participation, and proper voting procedures.
- 4.4. Closed Sessions: Used only for personnel, legal, property, negotiations, security, draft resolutions, third party confidential information, budget or policy items not yet public, or other sensitive matters.

- 4.5. A quorum, which is a majority of the number of trustees, must be present for every duly constituted meeting. No act, proceeding or policy of the Board shall be deemed valid unless adopted at a duly constituted meeting.
- 4.6. All meetings should not exceed six continuous hours unless extended by majority vote.
- 4.7. Cellular telephones are to be muted at Board meetings; the Board chair allowing reasonable and responsible use.
- 4.8. All board members shall notify the Board Chair and the Director of Education if they are unable to attend a Board meeting.
- 4.9. 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 trustees 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 inability to act or absence.

5. Agendas & Minutes

- 5.1. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Director set agendas in consultation with legislation and Board policy.
- 5.2. Agenda packages are distributed to trustees at least five (5) business days before the meeting and posted publicly.
- 5.3. Business typically includes: Call to Order (with conflict-of-interest declaration); Adoption of Agenda; Consent Items; Approval of Minutes; Delegations; Decision Items; Director's and CFO's Reports; Committee Reports; Correspondence; Celebrating Excellence; Information Items; Identification of Future Items; In Camera Session; and Adjournment.
- 5.4. Each agenda item is supported by briefing notes and relevant documents. Each action item includes a clear recommendation.
- 5.5. Trustees and committees may add items by advance notice, prior motion, or request. Late additions may be approved by majority consent.
- 5.6. Minutes record date/time/place, type of meeting, attendance, motions, votes, and declarations of conflict, and are posted online once approved. The minutes should be authorized and signed by the Board Chair and CFO.
- 5.7. The Board may hold or recess into a closed session by resolution, stating the reason and who may attend. These sessions are limited to specific confidential matters, such as:
 - 5.7.1. Legal advice or privileged communications
 - 5.7.2. Personal or personnel information
 - 5.7.3. Confidential government data
 - 5.7.4. Security or investigation-related issues
 - 5.7.5. Draft resolutions or internal policy discussions

5.7.6. Contract negotiations or strategic plans

5.7.7. Third-party confidential information

Discussions must stay on topic, and all attendees are required to maintain confidentiality. Sessions are not open to the public or media. The Board shall, during the closed session, adopt only a resolution to rise and report to the open public Board meeting.

5.8 In camera Session: An in camera session is a confidential portion of a regular meeting restricted to trustees only. It differs from a closed session, which may include administrators or invited resource persons. In camera sessions allow private Board deliberation on strictly Board level issues (e.g., trustee conduct or operations, leadership evaluation). No decisions are made in camera; any resolutions arising must be formally moved and adopted in open session.

6. Decision Making & Procedure

- 6.1. Motions require no seconder. A majority of trustees present decide; the Chair also votes. Voting is by show of hands except for Chair/Vice-Chair elections (secret ballot). Recorded votes may be requested by trustees. Abstentions are not counted as for or against. Procedures follow Robert's Rules of Order when not otherwise specified.
- 6.2. As a general guide, a trustee should not speak longer than five 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 speaker, unless it is to ask for important clarification of the speaker's remarks, and any such interruption shall not be permitted without permission of the Board Chair. Normally, the administrators will not participate in the debate, but upon request or to correct factual errors, or where otherwise appropriate, may provide information once a motion is moved. Amendments to the motion may be proposed at any time during discussion. No more than two amendments may be made 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 present.

7. Delegations & Correspondence

- 7.1. The Board further believes public interest can be enhanced by having members of the public make presentations at Board meetings.
- 7.2. The Board reserves the right to determine whether the delegation will be heard. Matters should be clearly within the practice and mandate of the Board. If granted, the Division Office, in consultation with the Director and Board Chair, shall make appropriate arrangements for the delegation to be heard.
- 7.3. Delegations may present with written notice within 10 days in advance of a meeting. Delegations must submit a brief written overview at least 5 days before the meeting. Delegations are limited to 10 minutes and up to two spokespersons. Sensitive matters

may be heard in closed session. Permission must be requested to record proceedings. Upon completion of the presentation, the Board Chair may inform the delegation if a decision is to be made. When/if a decision is reached, it will be communicated in writing to the spokesperson(s) and/or primary contact.

8. Trustee Remuneration & Conduct

- 8.1. Compensation and expense rates are reviewed annually at the organizational meeting. Trustees must submit itemized claims on approved forms. Rates are transparent and publicly clear.
- 8.2. Trustees are eligible for payment when attending regular board meetings, representing the board at official events, or participating in trustee development activities (e.g., seminars and conventions). They may also claim daily remuneration and allowances for board-authorized business, including travel, meals, and lodging.

9. Association Membership

- 9.1. The Board maintains active membership in the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA). Trustees may attend conventions and workshops, with expenses covered per policy. Voting delegates are assigned annually in line with SSBA bylaws.

10. Special Meetings of Electors

- 10.1. May be called by the Board, the Minister, or at least 25 electors. Notices must state the purpose; only that business will be considered. Electors attending elect a Chair and Secretary for the meeting. Proceedings are recorded and distributed to the Board and School Community Councils.

11. Attendance

- 11.1. Trustees are expected to attend all meetings. Trustees may lose office if absent from three consecutive regular meetings without authorization or medical proof, if convicted of an indictable offence, or if they violate conflict of interest provisions.

12. Board Self-Evaluation

- 12.1. The Board will conduct an annual self-evaluation and development process to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement and professional development.

References

The Education Act, The Local Government Election Act, Local Authorities Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Electronic Meeting Procedures Regulations, School Division Administration Regulations, 2017