

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

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 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 Board 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 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. If an election results in the appointment of all new Trustees, the responsibility of Board orientation will rest with the Superintendent and division staff.

3. The Board Chair, in consultation with the Superintendent, is responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the Board's orientation program for newly elected Trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each Trustee with access to the Board Orientation 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.
5. The Board will provide financial support for Trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association sponsored orientation seminars.

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 queries, or issues and problems not covered by Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
3. 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.
4. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division.
5. In consultation with the Board Chair, ensure requests for information from the Superintendent:
 - 5.1 Are supported by the majority of the Board;
 - 5.2 Are relevant to the role of the Board;
 - 5.3 Are an appropriate allocation of staff time and resources;
 - 5.4 Include an appropriate timeframe for staff to complete the request.
6. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, providing the benefit of the Trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
7. Attend Board meetings; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
8. 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.
9. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.

10. Participate, subject to Board approval, in Board/Trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
11. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
12. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow Trustees within two Board meetings following a Trustee development activity by submitting a Conference\Meeting Report Form.
13. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
14. Attend Division or school community functions when possible.
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.

Legal Reference: Section 53, 75, 85-96 Education Act
 RSA 2000 Oaths of Office Act

Amended: April 30th, 2020