



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

APPROVED: 2000.02.29

POLICY

Subject to the *School Act* and regulations, the *Elections Act* and other relevant government legislation, district bylaws and policies and collective agreements, trustees have certain rights and responsibilities, which provide a framework for carrying out their responsibilities as elected representatives of the public.

DEFINITIONS:

“**Rights**” are certain basic tenets that trustees are entitled to as partners in the public education system.

“**Responsibilities**” are the obligations necessary for trustees to remain accountable and maintain their rights.

“**Trustee**” is an elected member of the Board of Education.

Responsibility Centre: Board Chairperson and Superintendent of Schools

References: *School Act*, Parts 4, 5 and 6, Sections 30-95

Elections Act

Board bylaws

Board policies

Collective agreements

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PREAMBLE

This policy outlines the basic rights and responsibilities of trustees as they work to ensure the school district's operations are progressive, economical, efficient, effective and responsive to parents' and students' needs and accountable to the public.

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RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES**REGULATIONS:**

1. RIGHTS OF TRUSTEES

Subject to the *School Act* and regulations, the *Elections Act* and other relevant government legislation, district bylaws and policies and collective agreements, the district believe that trustees have, but are not limited to, the right to be:

- 1.1 Treated by other trustees, management, employees, students, parents and the public with respect and courtesy, in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- 1.2 Informed about the organization and operations of the district, the responsibilities of being a trustee and the time commitment required to conduct Board business.
- 1.3 Informed about the affairs of the school district by receiving accurate financial and management reports and thorough briefings by staff and other trustees.
- 1.4 Consulted in the assignment of responsibilities according to their skills, interests, background and training and be able to decline an assignment if it is felt the match of skills and interests is not appropriate.
- 1.5 Recognized appropriately for their leadership work and involvement as members of the Board.
- 1.6 Working in a safe and healthy environment, free from sexual and/or personal harassment.
- 1.7 Able to appeal decisions that deal with disciplinary matters concerning the trustee.
- 1.8 Given access by district administration staff to all federal and provincial government legislation, district bylaws, policies and procedures and any other information relevant to trusteeship.
- 1.9 Provided with regular reports from district administration staff that show the district is adhering to the province's required financial reporting systems and that the district's financial, personnel and other records are in order.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

Subject to the *School Act* and regulations, the *Elections Act* and other relevant government legislation, district bylaws and policies and collective agreements, the district believes that trustees have, but are not limited to, the responsibility to:

- 2.1 Make learning and academic achievement of students and the support of public education the prime focus of the district.
- 2.2 Be familiar with the bylaws and policies of the Board and the requirements of the *School Act*, regulations and ministerial orders and other relevant government legislation.



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- 2.3 Demonstrate honesty, integrity, courtesy and respect in their actions.
- 2.4 Contribute to the positive climate and reputation of the school district and public education.
- 2.5 Serve the district to the best of their ability, irrespective of their own beliefs.
- 2.6 Be respectful, sensitive and responsive to the diversity and rights of others.
- 2.7 Hire, evaluate and monitor the activities of the Superintendent of Schools.
- 2.8 Approve, revise and monitor policies consistent with the district's philosophy and goals, beliefs and values statements and the public's trust.
- 2.9 Actively participate in the Board's planning and goal-setting sessions and communicate the district's goals, directions and action plans clearly to employees, parents and the community.
- 2.10 Ensure the district runs as efficiently and effectively as possible within established Ministry and Board policies and procedures and the prevailing financial environment.
- 2.11 Ensure a district budget development process is followed that allows for input from parents, staff, administration and students.
- 2.12 Attend all Board and committee meetings or, when unable to attend a meeting, advise the Board or committee chair or the recording secretary in advance of the meeting.
- 2.13 Be informed about the items on the agenda prior to each meeting and ask questions to clarify issues they do not understand.
- 2.14 Inform the chairperson in a timely manner of items they wish placed on the agenda and provide relevant written reports to the recording secretary in time for them to be included in the agenda package.
- 2.15 Serve on a minimum of one committee of the Board and as the liaison trustee to a zone of schools.
- 2.16 Freely contribute their knowledge and experience during Board and committee meetings, respect divergent opinions and strive to reach consensus in decision making.
- 2.17 Declare when they are in a conflict of interest and remove themselves from the room while discussion and voting takes place on that issue.



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3. CODE OF ETHICS

Trustees have the responsibility to read, understand and abide by the Trustee Code of Ethics. Trustees will be asked to endorse the Trustee Code of Ethics and a signed copy will be filed with each trustee's records at the central administration office. Trustees will:

- 3.1 Devote time, thought and study to the duties and responsibilities so that they may render effective and creditable service.
- 3.2 Recognize that the expenditure of school funds is a public trust, and they will endeavour to see that all such funds shall be expended efficiently, economically and for the best interest of students.
- 3.3 Endeavour to work with their fellow trustees in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate. They will observe proper decorum and behaviour, encourage full and open discussions in all matters with their fellow trustees, treat them with respect and consideration and will not withhold or conceal from them any information or matter with which they should be concerned.
- 3.4 Base their personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation, vote with honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind, and thereafter, abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.
- 3.5 Not use the schools or any part of the school program for their own personal advantage or for the advantage of their friends. They will do everything possible to maintain the integrity, confidence and dignity of the office of school trustee, and they will resist every temptation and outside pressure to use their positions as trustees to benefit either themselves or any other individual or agency.
- 3.6 Remember at all times that as individuals they have no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board, unless the Board has so delegated. Their relationships with school staff, the local citizenry and the media will be conducted on the basis of this fact.
- 3.7 Not discuss the confidential business of the Board outside of Board meetings or committee meetings thereof.
- 3.8 Always bear in mind that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies by which the schools are to be administered, and that the daily administration of the educational program and conduct of school business shall be the responsibility of the superintendent of schools and his or her staff.
- 3.9 Attempt to understand the needs and aspirations of the public school system and do their best to support effective educational programs for the students.

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