

Policy 3

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its legislated mandate. The oath of office taken by each Trustee when they assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education. A Trustee must first and foremost be concerned with the interests of the Board.

The Board is a corporate body. The Trustee's primary responsibility is to act as a member of a corporate Board. Trustees collectively and individually must carry out their responsibilities, and the work of the Board, in good faith and with reasonable diligence. A Trustee's fiduciary duties are owed to the Board which is, in turn, accountable to the electorate.

Only a Trustee who is specifically authorized to act on behalf of the Board may act 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 District.

The Board shall indemnify a Trustee in accordance with [Bylaw 2 - Indemnification](#).

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

Specific Rights of Individual Trustees

The Trustee shall:

1. Be treated by other trustees, management, employees, students, parents and the public with respect and courtesy, in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
2. Be provided all information pertinent to the organization and operation of the district through Trustee Orientation sessions.
3. Be provided accurate information regarding the operations of the district at regular meetings of the Business Committee.
4. Be 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 that the match of skills and interests is not appropriate.
5. Be recognized appropriately for their leadership work and involvement as members of the Board.
6. Work in a safe and healthy environment, free from sexual and/or personal harassment.
7. Be able to appeal decisions that deal with disciplinary matters concerning themselves.

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Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The Trustee shall:

1. Make learning and academic achievement of students and the support of public education the prime focus of the district.
2. Become familiar with district bylaws, policies and procedures, meeting agendas, materials and reports in order to effectively participate in Board business.
3. Become familiar with the requirements of the School Act, regulations and ministerial orders and other relevant government legislation.
4. Support motions carried by the Board to advance the work of the Board and monitor progress to ensure decisions are implemented.
5. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
6. Refer operational and administrative matters to the Superintendent.
7. Refer requests for information or action by staff through the Board Chair to the Superintendent.
8. Upon receiving a complaint or inquiry from a parent, student, staff member, or community member, refer the inquiry back to the Teacher, Principal, or appropriate District Office personnel and will inform the Superintendent of this action.
9. Keep the Board and the Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the District.
10. Provide the Superintendent with information, giving the benefit of the Trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
11. Attend all meetings of the Board; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best opportunities possible for the education of children within the District, when unable to attend a meeting advise the Board, committee chair or recording secretary in advance of the meeting.
12. Attend committee meetings or meetings as a Board representative, as assigned, and report to the Board in a timely manner, when unable to attend a meeting advise the Board, committee chair or recording secretary in advance of the meeting..
13. When delegated responsibility, exercise such authority within the defined terms of reference in a responsible and effective way.
14. Participate in Board/Trustee orientation and development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the District can be enhanced.

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15. Participate in British Columbia School Trustees Association events as they are able.
16. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the school district.
17. Contribute to the positive climate and reputation of the school district and public education.
18. Demonstrate honesty, integrity, courtesy and respect in their actions and interactions.
19. Serve the district to the best of their ability, irrespective of their own beliefs.
20. Be respectful, sensitive and responsive to the diversity and rights of others.
21. Declare when they are in a conflict of interest, pecuniary and non-pecuniary, and remove themselves from the room while discussion and voting takes place related to the matter.
22. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.

Orientation

As a result of elections, the Board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate a 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 approved plans.

1. The District will offer an orientation program for all Trustees following an election that provides information on:
 - 1.1. Role of the Trustee and the Board;
 - 1.2. Organizational structures and procedures of the District;
 - 1.3. Board bylaws, policy, agendas and minutes;
 - 1.4. Existing District initiatives, strategic plan, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 1.5. District programs and services;
 - 1.6. Board's function as an appeal body;
 - 1.7. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest;
 - 1.8. Trustee remuneration and expenses; and
 - 1.9. Review established process and opportunities for community engagement.
2. The District will provide financial support for Trustees to attend British Columbia School Trustees Association sponsored orientation seminars.

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3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the District's orientation program for Trustees. The Superintendent shall ensure each Trustee has access to the Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.

Legal Reference: *School Act* Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85

Local Government Act

A Guide for School Trustee Candidates 2018 BCSTA

[Provisions of the *School Act*, RSBC 1996, c.412, relevant to the enactment of this regulation:
section 175(2)(i)]

School Trustee Oath of Office Regulation BC reg. 382/93 O.C.1548/93

Related Policies:

Policy 2 – Role of the Board

Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct

Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair

Policy 6 – Role of the Vice-Chair

Policy 7 – Board Operations

Policy 8 – Board Committees

Policy 9 – Board Representatives

Bylaw 2 – Indemnification

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