

GOVERNANCE

Policy 200

Trustee Role, Responsibilities and Code of Ethics

Role Of The Trustee

The role of the trustee is to prioritize the educational well-being of children and youth, by fostering a District culture that promotes student achievement, represents the broader needs of the community, and allocates resources responsibly and equitably in the best interest of every student. In recognition of the public trust and responsibility vested in them, Trustees are expected at all times to conduct themselves diligently, ethically, respectfully, impartially and in a manner that will strengthen and promote confidence in public education.

As members of the corporate board, trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the Board, and for the delivery and quality of educational services. Trustees must be cognizant that while being an elected government official carries public perceptions of authority, the *School Act* gives no individual authority to trustees. Regardless of this limitation, the actions of individual Trustees can damage the reputation and interests of the Board, and Trustees are accountable for their actions in carrying out their formal and informal responsibilities.

Because the Board's composition will change with each election, the Board believes an orientation program is necessary to ensure continuity and facilitate a smooth transition following an election. To be effective in their role, trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing Board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives and long-range plans. This Policy shall be reviewed by the Board within six months of any election, and on an annual basis thereafter.

Responsibilities of Trustees

In order to carry out their role as a Trustee, Trustees shall:

- Familiarize themselves with District policies, procedures, meeting agendas, and reports as necessary to discharge duties effectively.
- Participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board, unless excluded for conflict of interest or approved absence.
- Support the implementation of the Board's decisions, and follow progress to ensure decisions have the intended outcomes.
- Refer policy questions, or other general issues and concerns not covered by an existing Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion, decision or delegation.
- When parents or members of the community ask a question or raise a concern about a particular teacher, classroom, principal or school, refer the parent or community member to the Complaints and Appeals Bylaw or to the Superintendent or delegate. Trustees should

avoid direct discussion of the merits of the complaint in order to respect the authority of staff, and to avoid the need for the trustee to declare a conflict in any appeal which comes before the Board in the matter.

- Bring to the attention of the Board any issues that may significantly affect the District
- Exercise authority within defined limits when delegated such responsibility.
- Actively engage in professional development opportunities to enhance their knowledge of Trustee roles and responsibilities and become acquainted with current educational topics and trends.
- Share the materials and ideas gained at trustee development activities and outside meetings with fellow trustees.
- Familiarize themselves with current educational issues and trends as necessary to discharge duties effectively.
- Act as a liaison to assigned schools.
- Attend District or school events when invited and when possible.
- Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Ethics.

Code of Ethics

In carrying out their responsibilities, Trustees must uphold the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and ethical practice in all aspects of their role, acting in ways that strengthen public trust and inspire confidence in the Board's actions and decisions. This includes the following obligations:

1. Trustees shall abide by District policies, decisions, and all relevant provincial and federal legislation, including the *School Act* and the Oath of Office.
2. Trustees shall respect the confidentiality of in-camera board or committee meetings, interviews, and other privileged or personal information obtained in their capacity as Trustee. Trustees are explicitly prohibited from disclosing confidential, privileged, or personal information to the public or any other individual unless and until the Board has officially made such information public.
3. Trustees shall develop and contribute to a positive, respectful, and safe learning and working culture both within the Board and the District. Trustees shall respect the authority of the Superintendent and staff and ensure fair treatment for students, parents, staff, community members, and fellow trustees.
4. Trustees will not attempt to exercise individual authority with respect to Board matters, except as explicitly permitted by policies of the Board. Committees of Trustees or individual Trustees may not exercise the rights, duties and powers of the Board.
5. Trustees may interact with the Superintendent and staff; however, individual Trustees

must recognize that the authority of the Board to delegate specific and general administrative and management duties to one or more of its employees derives from the Board's corporate status and any assignment of responsibilities must comply with applicable Bylaw or Board policy.

6. Trustees must ensure that they do not purport to speak for the Board in any interactions with the public, media or other entities unless explicitly authorized by Bylaw or Board policy. Trustees will not express opinions on individual staff performance unless explicitly authorized by Bylaw, Board policy or an official Board process, and recognize that only the Board and not individual trustees, may assess the Superintendent's performance.
7. Consistent with their fiduciary obligations, Trustees shall make decisions in the best interests of the Board, based on available facts and their independent judgment. Trustees must not be unduly influenced by any individual or group.
8. Refrain from discussing, voting and influencing decision making on any matter in which they are in conflict. Trustees shall declare any pecuniary conflicts of interest in accordance with the School Act, and must avoid any situation where their decision making or actions could reasonably be seen as being influenced by personal interests, business relationships, or the interests of friends, family or associates.
9. Trustees recognize the public trust in the expenditure of Board funds by exercising financial prudence.
10. Trustees shall work collaboratively with fellow trustees in a spirit of harmony and cooperation and be respectful of differences of opinion. Trustees shall encourage full and open discussion in all matters with their fellow trustees, treating each other with respect and consideration.
11. Trustees must exercise responsible digital citizenship by using social media responsibly, professionally, and accurately, avoiding any dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information, and respecting the Board's obligations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
12. Trustees shall advocate for the diverse needs of all learners in the community consistent with its obligations under the *Human Rights Code*. This commitment extends to building partnerships with Indigenous communities and local First Nations in the ongoing work of Truth and Reconciliation, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion policies within the District.

References:

[School Act](#)

[Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

[Human Rights Code](#)

Adopted: 15 September 2008
Revised: 22 May 2024