

## **POLICY 3**

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### **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 he or she assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of 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. The Board may also delegate authority to a committee of the Board as outlined in Policy 8.

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 Division 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 Program, employee, student and Board evaluation;
  - 1.7 Board's function as an appeal body; and
  - 1.8 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend School Board Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the Division's orientation program for newly elected trustees.

4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about functions, policies, procedures and problems.

### **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 school operations, will refer the parent or community member back to the school and will inform the Superintendent of this action.
4. Participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
5. 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.
6. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
7. Participate, subject to Board approval, in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
8. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
9. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow trustees at the Board meeting immediately following a trustee development activity.
10. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
11. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Ethics.
12. Attend Division or school events when possible.
13. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Ethics to the Board during an in-camera session.

Legal Reference: Section 60, 61, 68, School Act  
Section 6, Commissioner of Oaths Act

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