

## Policy 4 - Role of the Trustee

Initial Approval:	September 4, 2018		
References:	The Education Act, 1995, Sections 71, 85, 87; The Local Government Election Act, 2015		
Date Revised:	March 3, 2025	Motion:	14101

Trustees are elected in accordance with the *Local Government Election Act*.

The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its role to achieve the school division's mission, vision, values and goals. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership.

The Board is a corporation. The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. A Trustee who is given Board 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.

### 1. Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The Trustee shall:

- 1.1. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
- 1.2. Prepare for and punctually attend meetings of the Board; participate in and contribute to the discussions and decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of students within the Division.
- 1.3. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns. Keep the Board and the Director of Education (Director) informed, in a timely manner, of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the Division.
- 1.4. Provide the Director with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the Trustee's judgment, experience, and familiarity with the community.
- 1.5. Accurately communicate the decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the majority decision of the Board when it does not.
- 1.6. When delegated responsibility, such as "Trustee on Rotation" for meetings or functions, shall exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
- 1.7. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for discussion and decision.
- 1.8. Refer administrative matters to the Director. The Trustee, upon receiving a complaint about school operations, will refer the parent or stakeholder back to the school and will inform the Board Chair and Director of this action. See Appendix A for more details.
- 1.9. Participate in Board/Trustee professional and faith development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.

- 1.10. Participate in professional development that focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, & accessibility.
- 1.11. Participate in professional development that focuses on Truth & Reconciliation.
- 1.12. Share materials and ideas gained from a Trustee development activity with fellow Trustees at the next available opportunity.
- 1.13. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
- 1.14. Attend significant Division or school functions when invited.
- 1.15. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- 1.16. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board during a closed session following the prescribed process for adding items to the agenda.

## **2. Board Activity Reports**

Trustees file with the Chief Financial Officer, a regular report on events or activities in which their attendance is expected and/or requested by virtue of their status as Board members.

- Events include, but are not limited to school visits, graduations, dinners, Catholic School Community Council meeting, special school functions and other Board related activities.
- Activities include, but are not limited to, meetings and communication with educational stakeholders, the media, and other entities.

## **3. New Trustee Orientation**

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.

- 3.1 The Division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected Trustees that provides information on:
  - a) Board Governance;
  - b) Role of the Trustee, the Board, and the Director;
  - c) Delegation of authority to the Director and related accountability mechanisms including Director evaluation process criteria and timelines;
  - d) Organizational structures and procedures of the Division, and governance tools used by the Board;
  - e) The Board Policy Handbook, agendas and minutes;
  - f) Existing Division strategic plan, initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
  - g) Communication Training;
  - h) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility Training;
  - i) Division programs and services;
  - j) Board's function as an appeal body;
  - k) Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities regarding conflict of interest; and

- l) Confidentiality in matters dealt within closed session.
- 3.2 The Deputy Chair in consultation with the Director will ensure the development and implementation of the Division's orientation program for newly elected Trustees.
- 3.3 New Trustees are required to attend the orientation session(s).
- 3.4 Incumbent Trustees are encouraged to help newly elected Trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures, and issues.
- 3.5 The Division will provide financial support for Trustees to attend Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association and Saskatchewan School Boards Association sponsored orientation seminars.

#### **4. On-going Professional Development**

- 4.1 Trustees shall have ongoing opportunity for continued training and education to enhance their governance capabilities. The Board will set their professional development budget annually. (see Appendix B Policy 8 – Board Operations)
- 4.2 Trustees shall have ongoing opportunity for training and education to ensure equitable and inclusive governance of Regina Catholic School Division.
- 4.3 Trustees shall have ongoing opportunity for training and education for continued growth and commitment to Truth & Reconciliation.
- 4.4 Trustees are encouraged to attend the SCSBA Convention and AGM, SCSBA Spring Assembly, SSBA Fall General Assembly, SSBA Spring Assembly, and any other forums organized for the discussion and resolution of continuing issues arising in the field of Catholic and Public education.

#### **5. Student Trustees**

- 5.1 STRIVE (Student Trustee Representative Initiative for Voice and Engagement) will work alongside the Board of Trustees and within the high school communities to promote student engagement in local governance, and to provide student voice that will inform decision making regarding quality Catholic education, academic opportunity and excellence, the celebration of diversity, and the development of informed, responsible citizens. Student Trustees do not have voting authority on Board decisions.

The role of an individual Trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its role in order to achieve the school division's mission, vision, values, and goals. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership. Paramount in the achievement of this role is communication.

### **1. Communication**

- 1.1 Trustees shall speak with deliberation and care, understanding that when they speak, the perception often is that the Board is speaking.
- 1.2 When speaking, Trustees will always communicate as accurately as possible.
- 1.3 Trustees may speak about a motion they put forward prior to the debate and Board decision. Once a decision is made, all Trustees are expected to publicly respect the Board decision.

### **2. Communication Etiquette**

Trustees will maintain the highest standards of civility and respect, and abstain from criticism of fellow Board members, the Board, employees, students, parents and the Church/clergy.

- 2.1 Trustees will be respectful of others in the volume of electronic communications sent to colleagues, will read information received from colleagues, will avoid debate by email and will avoid compromising the public nature of debate in sharing information.
- 2.2 Public statements will avoid criticism of the intentions or actions of other Board members, the Board, employees, students, and parents.
- 2.3 Recognizing that electronic communications is not a secure communication; Trustees will not use email to pass along sensitive or confidential information.
- 2.4 Trustees shall endeavor to work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation despite differences of opinion that may arise during debate.

### **3. Communication with Stakeholders**

The Board Chair will act as the chief spokesperson for the Board, as referenced in Policy 6 – Role of the Board Chair, except for those instances where the Board has delegated this role to the Director or designate.

- 3.1 The Board Chair will respond promptly to emails addressed to all Trustees. The return email will indicate that all Trustees are aware that the Board Chair is responding on behalf of the Board. Trustees will not respond if they are copied in an email.
- 3.2 If a Trustee receives a request or complaint from a stakeholder or the public, the request shall be forwarded to the Board Chair, who will consult with the Director if the request or complaint is operational in nature.
- 3.3 The Board Chair and the Director will establish who should be providing the response to a request or complaint from a stakeholder or the public.

### **4. Social Media Etiquette**

Trustees must be aware of social media etiquette when inviting feedback on Board proposals, including policy, and in modeling the principles of open and transparent governance and inclusiveness in public education. Trustees should strive to mitigate personal bias in their leadership/stewardship roles.

- 4.1 Trustee personal blogs, websites and social media groups will be respectful of Board values, priorities, policies and resolutions and respect confidentiality. Trustees will also consider any possibility of the perception of conflict of interest.
- 4.2 Trustees will consider the accuracy and potential legal liabilities of all posts before posting.
- 4.3 Trustees will model Catholic social justice teachings in their social media interactions.

**5. References for RCSD Employment**

- 5.1 To avoid any perceived conflict of interest, RCSD Trustees will not provide a reference for employment positions within the division.

## Appendix B

### SERVICES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO TRUSTEES

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Trustees shall be provided with the following services, materials and equipment while in office:

**1. Access to the following:**

- 1.1. *The Education Act, 1995, The Education Regulations, 2015* and related documents
- 1.2. Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Applications
- 1.3. All Collective Agreements
- 1.4. Current Division reports and resources (e.g., ESSP and most recent Accountability Report)
- 1.5. School year and meeting calendars
- 1.6. List of Catholic School Community Council officials (updated annually)
- 1.7. Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) Saskatchewan Catholic School Board Association, and Canadian School Board Association membership services

**2. Communications/Public Relations**

- 2.1 Notification of significant media events, reminders of special meetings
- 2.2 Speaker's notes/talking points as required or when requested
- 2.3 Individual and Board photographs

**3. Administrative Services**

- 3.1 Conference registration, travel and accommodation arrangements provided through the Senior Executive Assistant to the Director/Board of Trustees.
- 3.2 Information Technology (IT) service support shall be provided by the Technology Department.

**4. Equipment**

- 4.1 Trustees will be provided with either a cellphone and/or expenses related to cell phone use for the Division. The equipment shall be returned to the Technology Department or ownership transferred upon completion of the term in office.
- 4.2 Trustees will be provided with a Division device (laptop or tablet) to be used to conduct Board related business. Technology support for the devices will be provided by the IT Department. The device shall be returned to the IT Department upon completion of the term in office.