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## Policy 2

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### ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Board of Education of School District No. 39 (Vancouver) is the corporate entity established under the British Columbia School Act (“the Act”) and is governed by nine trustees elected by the public for a term defined in the Act.

As a corporate body, the Board holds the full legal capacity of a natural person, enabling it to govern the affairs of the school district, including entering into contracts, owning property, and managing its operations in accordance with provincial legislation.

The Board’s core mandate is to govern the school district in alignment with the duties and responsibilities set out in the School Act. This includes setting the strategic direction, establishing policies, approving budgets, and monitoring the performance of the district to ensure the improvement of student achievement in the school district.

The Board provides oversight of the district’s operations through its two corporate officers: the Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary Treasurer. Together, they ensure that Board decisions are effectively implemented across the district.

The Board’s governance role is distinct from the operational responsibilities of management. While the Board sets policy, defines strategic priorities, approves the annual budget and makes decisions required by law, it does not engage in the daily operations and management of the school district or staff. That responsibility lies with the Superintendent, who is accountable to the Board.

The Board acts collectively and exercises its authority through formal meetings and decisions. Outside of these meetings, individual trustees hold no greater authority than any other member of the public, unless specific authority has been delegated to them by the Board. Individual trustees must not direct or interfere with the work of the Superintendent or other staff members.

This governance framework ensures that the Board fulfills its legislative mandate while maintaining a clear separation between governance and administration, in accordance with Sections 65 and 85 of the School Act.

#### **SPECIFIC AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

##### **Strategic Planning**

The Board of Education plays a central role in setting the long-term direction of the District. Through strategic planning, the Board ensures that the District’s vision, mission, and goals are clearly defined, aligned with community needs, and supported by measurable outcomes. This process guides decision-making and resource allocation across all areas of the organization.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Board shall:

- Provide overall direction for the District by establishing foundational statements that reflect its core values.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the District in achieving its strategic priorities on an annual basis.
  - Approve the District’s Strategic Plan and any necessary adjustments to ensure continued relevance and impact.
  - Monitor the school district’s performance against agreed goals and objectives.
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**Policy and Bylaw Development**

The Board of Education is responsible for establishing the policy and regulatory framework that governs the operations of the District. Through the development, review, and implementation of policies and bylaws, the Board ensures that its governance practices are transparent, consistent, and aligned with legislative requirements and District priorities.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Board shall:

- Develop and approve policies and bylaws that reflect the Board's values, legal obligations, and strategic direction.
- Ensure that all policies are consistent with the School Act, Ministerial Orders, and other applicable legislation.
- Establish clear criteria and processes for the creation of new policies and the revision or repeal of existing ones.
- Review policies and bylaws on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with current practice.
- Delegate authority to the Superintendent for the implementation of Board policies and monitor their impact through regular reporting and evaluation.

**Fiscal Accountability**

The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring the effective stewardship of public funds and the financial sustainability of the District. Through strategic oversight and collaboration with the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer, the Board ensures that financial planning, resource allocation, and reporting support the District's educational priorities and comply with legislative requirements.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Board shall:

- Review and approve financial plans, budget bylaws and amended financial plans and budget bylaws as required.
- Review and approve the Long-Range Facilities Plan and Five-Year Capital Plans.
- Monitor financial performance through regular reporting, including quarterly financial reports and year-end projections.
- Appoint the external auditor, review the audit report and management letter, and approve follow-up actions.
- Approve major financial decisions, including borrowing, land transactions, and the allocation of surplus funds.

**Accountability to and Engagement of Community**

The Board of Education is committed to fostering meaningful relationships with the communities it serves. Through inclusive engagement and transparent communication, the Board ensures that its decisions reflect the diverse needs and perspectives of students, families, and community partners across the District.

To support this commitment, the Board shall:

- Establish and maintain processes that provide meaningful opportunities for community engagement and input into Board decision-making.
- Ensure that Board decisions are responsive to the needs of the student population and broader community.
- Build and sustain collaborative relationships with all levels of government, inherent rights holders, partner organizations, and community groups to advance shared educational goals.

**Human Resources**

The Board of Education holds key responsibilities in ensuring strong, stable, and effective leadership within the District. In collaboration with the Superintendent and in accordance with the School Act and related regulations, the Board exercises oversight of board officer appointments and succession planning to support the long-term success of the Vancouver School District.

With respect to the Superintendent, the Board shall:

- Appoint the Superintendent and conduct regular evaluations of their performance.
- Maintain a current, comprehensive, and clearly defined job description for the Superintendent that aligns with legislative requirements and outlines specific areas of responsibility.
- Establish annual performance growth goals in consultation with the Superintendent.
- Determine the Superintendent's compensation in accordance with provincial guidelines.
- Oversee succession planning for the Superintendent position, including:
  - A process to address unplanned vacancies or emergency transitions.
  - Criteria and procedures for leadership development, recognition, and future appointments aligned with the District's evolving needs.
- Provide ongoing advice and counsel to support the Superintendent in fulfilling their duties.
- Ensure a safe, respectful, and supportive working environment for the Superintendent.

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board shall also:

- Appoint the Secretary Treasurer.
- Approve collective bargaining plans and ratify collective agreements.
- Approve compensation plans and terms of employment for exempt staff.

## Board Effectiveness and Development

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining high standards of governance and continuous improvement. To ensure it fulfills its responsibilities effectively and remains aligned with District priorities, the Board engages in regular self-assessment and professional development. This commitment supports a culture of accountability, transparency, and leadership excellence.

To achieve this, the Board shall:

- Evaluate its effectiveness annually, using structured processes to assess performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Develop and implement a Board development plan that reflects District priorities and the outcomes of the Board’s self-evaluation.
- Regularly review and update governance mandates, including those of the Board, Board Committees, the Board Chair, and individual Trustees, to ensure clarity and alignment with evolving responsibilities.
- Provide comprehensive orientation and ongoing education for Trustees to support informed decision-making and effective governance.
- Maintain responsibility for managing its own affairs, ensuring that governance practices remain responsive, relevant, and aligned with best practices.

## Political Advocacy and Influence

The Board of Education plays an active role in advocating for public education and advancing the interests of the Vancouver School District. Through strategic engagement with government bodies, associations, and community leaders, the Board ensures that the District’s priorities are clearly communicated and effectively represented.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Board shall:

- Develop and implement an Advocacy Plan that outlines advocacy priorities, key messages, focus areas, relationships, and engagement strategies
- Advocate for the District’s strategic priorities through appropriate channels, including British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) and other provincial or national forums.
- Actively promote and defend the value of public education within the broader public and political landscape.
- Engage with inherent rights holders, municipal, provincial and federal government representatives to build support for the District’s goals and initiatives.

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Legal Reference: Sections 65, 85 School Act

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Adopted: Sept 24, 2018

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June 23, 2025

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