
Policy 3

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustee Elections

- 1.1 The election of trustees is governed by the Local Government Act and the Vancouver Charter. The British Columbia School Act (Sections 32 to 34) stipulates the qualifications required for a person to be nominated for office and to be elected or appointed to and hold office as a trustee.
- 1.2 General school elections to elect trustees for all boards of education in the province are held every four years.
- 1.3 Elected school trustees assume office on the first Monday after November 1st following the election, provided they have taken the Oath of Office, by oath or solemn affirmation.

Trustee Responsibilities

- 1.4 Trustees are members of a corporate board responsible for the improvement of student achievement in the school district. Trustees have a duty to act prudently, honestly and in good faith in the best interests of the Board of Education and the school district. Trustees must abide by the *School Act* and faithfully perform the duties of the office with care, skill and prudence.
- 1.5 Pursuant to section 65 of the *School Act*, the Board of Education of School District No. 39 (Vancouver) is a corporation. The Board must make decisions at meetings that are held in accordance with section 69 of the *School Act*. Trustees have no authority to make decisions outside of meetings properly constituted in accordance with section 69 of the *School Act*.
- 1.6 The Board may establish committees and specify the functions and duties of those committees. Section 65(3) of the *School Act* prohibits committees of Trustees and individual Trustees from exercising the rights, duties and powers of the Board.
- 1.7 The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its legislated mandate.
- 1.8 Trustees must comply with the requirements of the *School Act* that relate to conflict of interest. If a Court determines that a Trustee has knowingly contravened section 58 of the *School Act*, regarding the duty of a Trustee as it relates to conflicts of interest, the Court must declare the office of the Trustee vacant and may, if the contravention resulted in financial gain, require the person to make restitution to the party suffering the loss or to the Board.
- 1.9 A Trustee does not have any authority to act on behalf of, or represent, the Board, except as explicitly permitted by the Bylaws and policies of the Board.

Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

- 2.1 Trustees must become familiar with Board Bylaws and policies, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in Board business.
- 2.2 Trustees must comply with all Board Bylaws and policies, including the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- 2.3 Trustees should keep the Board, the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might significantly affect the school district.
- 2.4 Trustees are expected to attend meetings of the Board and participate in and contribute to decisions of the Board. Trustees are also expected to attend meetings of any committee that they are assigned to and to report to the Board in a timely manner.
- 2.5 If a Trustee is continuously absent from Board meetings for three consecutive months, the Trustee's position on the Board is deemed vacant, unless the absence was due to sickness or with leave of the Board. The absentee Trustee is disqualified from serving as a Trustee until the next election.
- 2.6 A Trustee may submit motions for consideration by the Board. Notices of motion must be submitted to the Board Chair, the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer by no later than noon on the Wednesday prior to the public board meeting to be included in the Board meeting agenda.
- 2.7 When a decision has been made by the Board, Trustees shall respect the decision of the Board.
- 2.8 Trustees are encouraged to refer (other than acknowledge receipt and advise of referral) parents, staff or members of the public who raise concerns or make inquiries, as follows:
 - a) governance issues not covered by Board policy to the Board, through the Board Chair;
 - b) operational and administrative matters to the Superintendent; and
 - c) parents who raise concerns about employee decisions to the Conflict Resolution Process for School Based Concerns and the Appeal Policy and Procedures Bylaw, and will inform the Superintendent of this action.
- 2.9 Trustees should provide the Superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the Trustee's judgment, experience, and familiarity with the community.
- 2.10 Trustees shall arrange, through the Superintendent or designate, contact with school district staff.
- 2.11 Trustees shall strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the school district.
- 2.12 Trustees shall continue to adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct and carry out their duties with integrity during the trustee election period as defined in the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Trustee Orientation and Professional Development

- 3.1 The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship.
- 3.2 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. Trustees are expected to attend orientation sessions and review the orientation materials provided.
- 3.3 The school district will offer an orientation program for all trustees following an election that provides information on:
 - a. Role of the trustees, role the Board, and role of management;
 - b. Board policies, agenda setting process, meeting proceedings and decorum;
 - c. Organizational structures and procedures of the school district;
 - d. Existing school district strategic plan, long-range plans, annual reports, financial information (e.g. budgets, financial statements) and key initiatives;
 - e. District programs and services;
 - f. Host Nations and Rights Holders;
 - g. Board's conflict resolution procedure;
 - h. Board's function as an appeal body; and
 - i. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest, freedom of information and protection of privacy, human rights.
- 3.4 Trustees are encouraged to attend orientation sessions, professional development, and workshops that will enhance their ability to participate and contribute as a Board member.
- 3.5 The Board Chair, the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the school district's orientation program for Trustees. The Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer 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: Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85 School Act
 Local Government Act
 Vancouver Charter

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