



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 statement, goals and objectives. The oath of office taken or affirmation made by each trustee when s/he assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public Catholic education.

The Board of Trustees is a corporation. The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. Individual trustees exercise an effective decision-making role in the context of corporate action. A trustee who is given authority by Board motion 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. Individual trustees do not have the authority to direct the Division's administration and staff.

Alberta's Catholic schools exist to offer families a distinct, faith-filled, Living in Christ, education for their children. The trustees of a Catholic school board are empowered by the community to fulfill both the educational requirements set forth by the government and the vision of the faith community.

This presents Catholic school trustees with a unique opportunity. They must ensure that students are provided an education, which includes literacy skills, the ability to interpret and communicate information, analyze quickly and creatively, and solve problems effectively. At the same time, the Board must ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected at all times in its policies and practices.

As leaders in the faith community, Catholic trustees require an understanding, a willingness to grow and a commitment to bearing daily witness to the faith. Catholic trustees are entrusted with certain denominational school rights, powers and privileges enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. They exercise these rights with the religious guidance of parish and diocesan authorities.

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.

Trustee orientation is necessary for effective trusteeship.

1. The Division will offer an orientation for all newly elected and returning trustees that provides information on:
 - 1.1 Role of the trustee and the Board;
 - 1.2 Board policy, agendas and minutes;



- 1.3 Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
 - 1.4 Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 1.5 Division programs and services;
 - 1.6 Board's function as an appeal body; and
 - 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
 - 1.8 The Division technology being used to facilitate Board communications and digital file storage and access.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association sponsored orientation seminars.
 3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the Division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee with access to the Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by- election.
 4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

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 discussion and decision.
3. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent.
4. The trustee, upon receiving a concern from a parent or community member, will direct the parent or community member to the appropriate personnel.
5. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the Division.
6. Assist the Superintendent with local perspective, providing the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the local school and the community.



7. Attend Board meetings; participate in and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
8. Participate in and attend Board committee meetings as per Policy 8.
9. Model the values and requirements of a practicing Catholic and participate in parish and church activities.
10. Ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected in the Board's policies and practices.
11. Recognize their fiduciary responsibility to the Division and act in the best interests of the Division understanding that the Division needs are paramount.
12. 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.
13. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
14. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
15. Stay current with respect to provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.
16. Share the materials and ideas gained with trustees, in written format, following a trustee professional development / information gaining activity/session.
17. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
18. Liaise with local Parish Council(s).
19. Act as a liaison for assigned schools and attend School Council meetings.
20. Attend Division or school community functions when possible.
21. Become familiar with and adhere to the Trustee Code of Ethics.
22. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Ethics to the Board Chair.

Legal Reference: Section 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 222 Education Act
Section 16 The Notaries and Commissioners Act