

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

As leaders in the faith community, Catholic trustees require an understanding of, willingness to grow in, and a commitment to bearing daily witness to the faith. Catholic trustees have a unique, dual opportunity. They must ensure that students are provided an education which meets or exceeds the goals of Alberta Education, and at the same time ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected at all times in its policies and practices.

Trustees are elected in accordance with the Local Authorities Election Act. 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.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

1. Model the values of a practicing Catholic and participate in parish and church activities.
2. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
3. Refer governance queries, or issues and problems not covered by Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
4. 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.
5. Keep the Board and Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might impact the Division.
6. Participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the Division.

7. 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.
8. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
9. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
10. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
11. Provide written reports to share information and ideas with fellow trustees at the Committee of the Whole meeting that follows a trustee development activity, session, or meeting.
12. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
13. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
14. Attend significant jurisdiction or school events when possible.
15. Act as a liaison for assigned schools, and attend School Council meetings on a discretionary basis or on specific invitation, but at least twice annually.
16. Serve on Board committees.

Trustee Orientation

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 strategic and capital plans.

The Board requires new trustees to participate in orientation activities sponsored by the Division and encourages participation in those sponsored by Board associations.

1. The Division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected trustees that provides information on:
 - 1.1. Existing Board policy, agendas and minutes.
 - 1.2. Trustees' role, responsibilities and powers.
 - 1.3. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
 - 1.4. Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans.

- 1.5. Organizational structure, committee structure and functions and channels of communication.
- 1.6. Division programs and services.
- 1.7. Board's function as an appeal body.
- 1.8. Trustee Handbook.
- 1.9. Other relevant information as required.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association or Alberta Catholic School Trustees' 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 and staff members are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about functions, policies, procedures and problems.
5. The trustee shall, at the time of assuming office, take and subscribe to the official oath and deposit with the secretary-treasurer.

Legal Reference: Section 53, Education Act, Section 75, 85-96, RSA 2000 Oaths of Office Act