



## **POLICY 3: TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION**

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The role of the trustee is to contribute to the work of the Board as it carries out its mandate to govern and achieve its vision, mission, beliefs, values and principles. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership. The oath of office taken by each trustee when she/he assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education.

Catholic trustees have a unique, dual challenge. 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.

As leaders in the Catholic faith community, Catholic trustees require an understanding, a willingness to grow and a commitment to bearing daily witness to the faith. To meet this challenge, 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.

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 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.

### **1. Board 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 plans.

The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship. All trustees will attend all aspects of the orientation program.

The Division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected trustees that provides information on:

- 1.1 Role of the trustee and the Board;
- 1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
- 1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
- 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.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) and Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association (ACSTA) sponsored orientation seminars.
  3. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta Education sponsored trustee workshops or information sessions.
  4. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing 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.
  5. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

## **6. Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees**

- 6.1 The trustee will model involvement in the faith community.
- 6.2 The trustee will refer queries, or issues and problems, not covered by Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
- 6.3 The trustee can engage with the public through a variety of communication methods, understanding that all communications and interactions must reflect the principles of the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- 6.4 Trustees will be cognizant that they are representing the interests of the Board while posting or commenting on social media, and aware of public perception that their posts, comments and social media engagement, are in accordance with their duties within the school division.
- 6.5 If trustees choose to post pictures of students on their social media sites, permission must be given by the relevant school authority.
- 6.6 The trustee will 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.
- 6.7 The trustee will 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.

- 6.8 The trustee will participate in training opportunities in order to ensure that the appropriate skills, knowledge and understandings are acquired.
- 6.9 The trustee will ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected at all times in the Board's policies and practices.
- 6.10 The trustee will become familiar with Division policies, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in Board business.
- 6.11 The Trustee will keep the Board Chair and/or the Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division. Refer administration matters to the Superintendent.
- 6.12 The trustee will provide the Superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
- 6.13 Trustees are encouraged to share Divisional information, key messages, Board priorities, exemplary practices, and student achievement and learning results.
- 6.14 The trustee will, in alignment with the Board engagement efforts, provide for the engagement of parents, students and the community in matters related to education.
  - 6.14.1 Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns prior to a Board decision;
  - 6.14.2 Interpret the needs of the community to the Board and the Board's action to those we serve; and
  - 6.14.3 Liaise with designated School Council(s).
- 6.15 Trustees are encouraged to develop individual growth plans on an annual basis.
- 6.16 The trustee will share the materials and ideas gained from a trustee development activity with fellow trustees at the next available opportunity.
- 6.17 The trustee will stay current with respect to provincial, national and international education issues and trends.
- 6.18 The trustee will contribute to a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
- 6.19 The trustee will attend Division or school functions where possible.
- 6.20 The trustee will adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- 6.21 The trustee will report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair or when applicable, to the Vice-Chair.

Reviewed: March 2011, January 2018  
Revised: November 2019, June 2022

## APPENDIX 'A'

### SERVICES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO TRUSTEES

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

1. Reference:

- ◆ Access to *The Education Act*
- ◆ Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual
- ◆ School year and Annual Work Plan
- ◆ Current telephone listings of schools, principals, vice-principals and school secretarial staff
- ◆ List of School Council Chairs
- ◆ These items shall be available online on the RDCRS Board Portal

2. Communications/Public Relations:

- ◆ Access to Superintendent weekly updates on Division News
- ◆ Notification of significant media events, reminders of special meetings
- ◆ Access to school newsletters to trustee liaison
- ◆ Name tags, business cards, lapel pins
- ◆ Speaker's notes
- ◆ Individual and Board photographs

3. Administrative/Secretarial Services:

- ◆ Access to interoffice mail
- ◆ Conference registration, travel and accommodation arrangements
- ◆ E-mail address and Information Technology service support
- ◆ Document management, photocopying and related secretarial services

4. Equipment

- ◆ A computer or stipend, with appropriate software and access. The equipment shall be returned to the Board upon completion of the term in office.
- ◆ Cell phone stipend.

5. Corporate Clothing

- ◆ One piece of corporate clothing

6. Briefcase

7. Professional Development Allowance of \$5,000 per year. This includes mileage, hotel, registration and meals.

8. Mileage compensation for all Board business (stipend)

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Appendix revised June 2022