

5. Board Operations

5.1 Board Organization

The Board of Trustees is committed to representing the best interests of the entire community that comprises Western School Division through effective governance. It is the Board as a body that speaks for the division and Board practice recognizes that it is the Board, not Board members, who have authority. There are roles and responsibilities for individual Board members derived from the roles and responsibilities of the Board as a whole group.

5.2 Role of the Chair

The Chairperson is elected by the Trustees to lead the processes of the Board. The Board recognizes that the Chairperson is not the head of the division. The Chairperson is typically the official spokesperson of the Board, signs all legal documents on behalf of the Board, and chairs most of the meetings of the Board.

5.3 Principles Surrounding Committee Structure

Committees of the Board are established to enhance and complement the work of governance; they report to the Board and are different from administrative committees. Board Committees do not assist or advise staff and shall only request information from staff through the Superintendent. Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees of the Board are established by the Board for a specified purpose. In keeping with the broad focus of the Board, Board committees will not normally have direct dealings with staff operations.

5.4 Committee of the Whole

There are three (3) primary areas of responsibility where the Board functions as a Committee of the Whole, namely Policy, Finance, and Personnel.

Policy – The Board is responsible for the:

- i. Development or amendment;
- ii. Approval;
- iii. Review of all Western School Division Board policies.

Finance – The Board is responsible for the:

- i. Development of all division budgets according to its guidelines and working in conjunction with the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer;
- ii. Perusal of all accounts of division income and expenditures;
- iii. Appointment of auditors.

Personnel

- i. All trustees are involved in the hiring of members of the Administration Council.

5.5 Standing Committees

The Board assigns contact/committee responsibilities to individual trustees in the following areas:

- **Division Liaison Committees**
- **Regional Vocational Education (RRTVA)**
- **Negotiations**
- **Governance Committee**
- **Communication Committee**

5.6 Ad Hoc Committees

The Board may create ad hoc committees as required. Ad hoc committees deal only with matters that have been referred to it by the Board. Ad hoc committees are responsible for action and policy recommendations to the Board on all matters referred to them.

5.7 Appointment of Senior Administration

The Board may appoint people for Senior Administration positions, fix and pay remuneration, and define duties.

5.8 Public Participation at Board Meetings

The Board invites public participation at public Board meetings and will have the opportunity to ask questions at some point during the agenda. A delegation wishing to address the Board at a meeting must advise the Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer will advise the delegation of guidelines as outlined in Board by-laws. With unanimous agreement by the Board, the Board may hear an unannounced delegation.

5.9 Meetings

i. Re-organizational Meeting

It is the role of the Board to commence the first meeting of the Board in accordance with the *PSA*. The first meeting of the Board shall take place in September. In a Trustee election year, the first meeting of the Board shall take place within 14 days after Trustee general elections.

ii. Regular Meetings

The agenda reflects the business the Board must monitor, attend to and pursue in its governance role. A proposed agenda is presented at the beginning of each regular Board meeting, which shall take place on the second and fourth Monday of each month, except July and August. The parliamentary authority used for Western School Division meetings is Roberts Rules of Order. Regular meetings should not normally be convened without the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer present.

iii. Special Meetings

Special Board meetings may be convened at any time by the Chair with the consent of a quorum of the Trustees, as per provincial legislation. Special meetings are not usually convened without the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer present.

iv. In-camera Meetings

In-camera meetings are held in accordance with the *PSA* of Manitoba. However, at times, it is appropriate for the Board to meet behind closed doors when the Board must deal with sensitive matters such as negotiations, personnel matters, litigation, student files, land acquisitions/disposal, large financial transactions, security and disciplinary matters. All discussion is, and shall be, confidential.

v. Delegations to the Board Meeting

Delegations from the public are welcome to present to the Board at a public Board Meeting. The requesting delegation shall submit their request in writing as per guidelines provided by the Secretary-Treasurer and outlined in the Board by-laws. Any associated documentation and background information will be considered by the Board. The Board will not offer their decision to the delegation at the time of the presentation.

5.10 Commitment to Respect the Decisions of the Board

According to provincially-legislated authority, the Board is a corporate body established to provide governance and leadership for the Western School Division. As members of a democratically-elected body, it is important and necessary for individual Trustees to be active participants at Board meetings, and to encourage and represent a diversity of viewpoints. Individual trustees are ultimately accountable to the public to bring forward the voice and views of the people within the jurisdiction of the Western School Division. **This Commitment to Respect the Decisions of the Board does not demand unanimous decisions, but does require that all Trustees shall respect the decisions of the Board.** According to this Commitment to Respect the Decisions of the Board, Trustees:

- i. Support Board decisions. Trustees are expected to contribute and to influence the decisions of the Board. Board decisions are only those that have been voted upon and are reflected in the minutes of the Board meetings as policies or resolutions. Once the Board has made a decision, each Trustee will respect the decision of the Board and be prepared to explain the decision of the Board to the public.
- ii. Never attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization or the Superintendent. While the Board expects individual Trustees to be given common courtesy, it does not require the Superintendent or any other staff member to heed any individual Trustee's opinions or instructions. Individual Trustees have no authority over staff and staff operations.
- iii. As members of a governance board, Trustees will focus on what needs to be accomplished for effective governance while at the Board table.

- iv. State the applicable policy when issues are raised by community members, staff or Trustees. Board discussion shall center on whether the concerns justify changes to the policy or whether monitoring of the policy is necessary, not on the details of the issue.
- v. Recognize that the Chairperson is the official spokesperson of the Board, unless that responsibility has been delegated by the Board.

5.11 Community Connections

The Board will establish formal connections with the community, with government, and with other relevant agencies and organizations to support the achievement of Board goals for the school division. The Board will share information, proactively identify issues of importance, work collaboratively and build relationships.

5.12 Liaison With School Boards Associations

The Western School Division Board will remain a member of the Manitoba School Boards Association and pay such fees as are levied by that association unless otherwise decided by a majority vote.

Reference:

Introduction

Policy 1 – Mission and Belief Statements

Policy 2 – Board Governance Model

Policy 6 – Trustee Code of Conduct, Member Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Policy 11 – General Administration Constraints and Decision-making Matrix

Policy 14 – Community Engagement

Legal Reference: *The Public Schools Act*

Date Adopted: June 23, 2015

Date Amended: August 28, 2017