

## SECTION 200 – Board Governance

### **POLICY 202: ROLE OF TRUSTEES**

#### **POLICY**

Each Trustee represents all public-school constituents of the Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD) and represents this electorate through the democratic process. The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate in order to achieve its mission.

The Board of Trustees is a corporation, accountable to the Minister of Education. The decisions of the Board of Trustees in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. Unless delegated by the Board of Trustees, an individual Trustee only has the authority and status of any other citizen.

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 of Trustees 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 of Trustees, 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.

#### **GUIDELINES**

Each Trustee shall:

1. Become familiar with the Education Act, Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in Board business.
2. In alignment with Board engagement efforts, provide for the engagement of parents/guardians, students and the community in matters related to education.
  - 2.1. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns prior to a Board decision.
  - 2.2. Interpret the needs of the community to the Board and the Board's actions to those we serve.
  - 2.3. Liaise with designated School Council(s).
3. Refer matters not covered by Board policy but requiring a corporate decision to the Board for discussion.

4. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. In accordance with Policy 532; Healthy Interactions, the trustee, upon receiving a complaint from a parent or community member about operations, will refer the parent or community member back to the school or department and will inform the Superintendent of this action.
5. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the Division. Personnel matters are to be brought to the attention of the Superintendent only.
6. Be prepared for and attend Board meetings; contribute to the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the MHPSD.
7. Recognize their fiduciary responsibility to the MHPSD and act in the best interests of the MHPSD understanding that MHPSD needs are paramount.
  - 7.1. Vote on every Board motion, unless there is a conflict of interest.
  - 7.2. Support a majority vote of the Board as if the vote had been unanimous.
8. When delegated responsibility, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
9. Participate in Board committees and trustee development sessions. Share the materials and ideas gained with the Board at its next meeting.
10. Be cognizant of provincial, national and international educational issues and trends and strive to stay current with educational issues and trends.
11. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
12. Liaise with School Council(s) and regularly attend Division or school community functions.
13. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
14. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair, or where applicable, to the Vice-Chair.
15. Support the corporate decisions of the Board.

### ORIENTATION

As a result of elections, the Board may experience changes in trusteeship. 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 are expected to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

1. In the year of an election, the Division will host a preliminary orientation session for all elected candidates prior to the Organizational Meeting, which will include a review of and an expression of interest in Board assignments and committees.



2. The MHPSD will offer an orientation program for all trustees that provides information on:
  - 2.1. Role of the Trustee and the Board;
  - 2.2. Board policy, agendas and minutes;
  - 2.3. Organizational structures and procedures of the MHPSD;
  - 2.4. Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
  - 2.5. MHPSD programs and services;
  - 2.6. Board's function as an appeal body;
  - 2.7. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest; and
  - 2.8. Trustee remuneration and expenses.
3. The orientation program may also include:
  - 3.1. A tour of the offices and the opportunity to meet MHPSD Office staff.
  - 3.2. A tour of the schools and the opportunity to meet principals and staff.
  - 3.3. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Canadian School Board Association, Alberta School Boards Association and/or Public-School Boards of Alberta sponsored seminars and orientation events.
    - 3.3.1. 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 ensuring the development and implementation of the Division's orientation program for Trustees.
5. Incumbent Trustees are encouraged to help newly elected Trustees become informed about history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

#### REFERENCES

#### [Policy 532 – Healthy Interactions](#)

Education Act: Sections 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96

Commissioner for Oaths Regulation: Section 6

**Approved:** January 20, 2004

**Revised:** October 22, 2019

