Medicine Hat Public School Division

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MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 200 – Board Governance

POLICY 202: ROLE OF TRUSTEES

POLICY

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 and values and principles. The oath of office taken by each trustee when s/he assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public 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 resident of the Division.

1. Each Trustee shall:
   - 1.1. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in Board business.
   - 1.2. In alignment with Board engagement efforts, provide for the engagement of parents, students and the community in matters related to education.
     - 1.2.1. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns prior to a Board decision.
     - 1.2.2. Interpret the needs of the community to the Board and the Board's actions to those s/he serves.
     - 1.2.3. Liaise with designated School Council(s).
   - 1.3. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. 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.
   - 1.4. Keep the Board Chair and Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division. Personnel matters are to be brought to the Board Chair and Superintendent only.

1.5. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, providing the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
1.6. Refer queries or issues and problems not covered by Board policy or Administrative Procedure, to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
1.7. Attend meetings of the Board; participate in, and contribute to, the decision of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.
1.8. 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.
1.9. When delegated responsibility by the Board, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
1.10. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so that quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.
1.11. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
1.12. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow trustees following a trustee development activity or meetings in a timely manner.
1.13. Contribute to a safe and caring environment both within the Board and the Division.
1.14. Attend Division or school functions when possible.
1.15. When seeking nomination in a federal or provincial election or by-election, take a leave of absence without pay.
1.16. Become familiar with and adhere to Policy 202.1 – Trustee Code of Conduct.
1.17. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair, or where applicable, to the Vice Chair.

2. 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 are expected to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

2.1. The Division will offer an orientation program for all trustees that provides information on:
2.1.1. The Trustee Code of Conduct;
2.1.2. Concepts of trust, teamwork and "smarter" meetings;
2.1.3. Role of the trustee, with emphasis on the fiduciary duty, and the role of the Board;

2.1.4. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
2.1.5. Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
2.1.6. Board policy, agendas and minutes;
2.1.7. Board's function as an appeal body;
2.1.8. Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans; and
2.1.9. Division programs and services.

2.2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association sponsored seminars and orientation events.
2.2.1. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta Education sponsored trustee workshops or information sessions.

2.3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the Division's orientation program for trustees.
2.3.1. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee with access to the references listed in Policy 3 Appendix – Services, Materials and Equipment Provided to Trustees at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.
2.3.2. The Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual are available on the Division website for trustees.

2.4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

2.5. Trustees are commissioners for oaths, empowered by virtue of their office and take and receive affirmations and declarations in Alberta for use in Alberta.

1. 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: Section 33, 34, 51, 52 53, 64, 67, 75, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96
Section 16 Notaries and Commissioners Act

Approved: January 20, 2004
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