

Section:	Governance
Title:	Board Roles: Trustees, Board Chair, and Vice-Chair

Purpose

To delineate the roles of Trustees, the Board Chair, and the Vice-Chair.

Policy

The role of the Trustee is to contribute to the processes of the Board as it carries out its mandate of improving student achievement and outcomes.

The role of the Board Chair is to preside over all meetings of the Board, to safeguard the integrity of the Board’s processes, and to represent the Board to the broader community.

The role of the Vice-Chair is to perform the role of the Board Chair in the Board Chair’s absence, and to be sufficiently apprised of issues in order to step into the role of Board Chair with minimal notice.

Guidelines

The Board of the Mission Public School District provides the governance direction and oversight for the School District in accordance with the specified powers delegated to the School District by the *School Act*. The governance direction and oversight are carried out through the Trustees, including the Board Chair and Vice Chair.

Trustees contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate to achieve its mission and goals related to student success. The oath of office taken by each trustee when they assume office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education.

The School Act gives no individual authority to trustees. The Trustee’s primary task is to act as a member of a corporate Board. Trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the Board and for the delivery and quality of educational services. Trustees serve the community as an elected representative.

The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the School District. A Trustee who is given 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. The Board is then responsible for the actions of the Trustee.

The Role of Trustees

Responsibilities of all individual trustees include:

- Initiating, developing, and approving School District policies and procedures.
- Being familiar with meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.

- Attending and being prepared for meetings of the Board, to participate in and contribute to the decisions of the Board, to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the School District. This includes reviewing all materials prior to Board meetings, and requesting additional information prior to the meeting as necessary, whenever possible. Trustees are to declare when they are not prepared.
- Participating in Board/Trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the district can be enhanced.
- Participating in the development of Strategic Plans, and the focus and the monitoring of progress on the plan.
- Supporting the decisions of the Board and monitoring progress to ensure decisions are implemented.
- Providing the Superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the Trustee's judgement, experience, and familiarity with the community.
- Striving to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the School District.
- Exercising delegated responsibility within the defined limits in a responsible, effective way.
- Sharing materials and ideas gained from a Trustee development activity with fellow Trustees at the next available opportunity.
- Informing the Board and the Superintendent in a timely manner of matters coming to their attention that might affect the School District.
- Referring governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
- Referring queries, issues or problems raised by a parent or community member about a school or school policy to the principal and, where appropriate, inform the Superintendent or designate.
- Being current with provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
- Attending School District or school functions when invited and when possible.
- Being familiar with, and adhering to, the Trustee Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Reporting a violation of the Trustee Code of Ethical Conduct to the Board during a closed meeting.

The Role of the Board Chair

Responsibilities of the Board Chair include:

- Presiding over all Board meetings and ensuring that such meetings are conducted in accordance with the *School Act* and the policies and procedures as established by the Board and where those are silent, Robert's Rules of Order, including:
 - Conducting meetings in accordance with the Board Meeting Procedures Policy, ensuring participants respect the time set for meetings.
 - Maintaining order, civil conduct and decorum.
 - Displaying firmness, courtesy, tact, impartiality and willingness to give Trustees an opportunity to speak on the subject under consideration.
 - Ensuring that agenda items support the strategic plan.

- Ensuring that debate is relevant. The Chair, in keeping with their responsibility to ensure that debate is relevant to the question, shall remind members that they must speak to the question.
- Determining questions of order and procedure, subject to an appeal by the rest of the Board. The chair may speak to points of order in preference to other members.
- Submitting motions or other proposals to the final decision of the meeting by a formal show of hands.
- Extending hospitality to other Trustees, officials of the Board, the press, and members of the public.
- Maintaining regular connection with the Superintendent to have a working knowledge of current issues and events.
- Assist the Board to ensure the business of the Board is focused on improving student achievement, and the strategic priorities of the Board.
- Conveying directly to the Superintendent concerns from other Trustees, parents, students or employees which may affect the administration of the district.
- Keeping informed of significant developments within the School District
- Keeping other Trustees informed of significant developments within the School District.
- Bringing all matters requiring a decision of the Board to meetings of the Board.
- Coordinate the appointment of Trustee Liaison positions.
- Acting as the chief spokesperson for the Board, except for those instances where the Board has delegated this role to another individual or group.
- Being the primary contact for all Government to Government communications.
- Being an ex-officio member of all committees appointed by the Board.
- Being a signing officer for the School District.
- Representing the Board, or arrange alternative representation, at official meetings or other public functions.
- Bringing concerns of inappropriate behavior on the part of a Trustee to a closed Board meeting, in accordance with the Trustee Code of Ethical Conduct policy.
- Ensuring that the Board engages in regular assessments of its effectiveness as a Board.

The Role of the Board Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is responsible for:

- Acting on behalf of the Board Chair, in the latter's absence and shall have all the duties and responsibilities of the Board Chair.
- Assisting the Board Chair in ensuring that the Board operates in accordance with its own policies and procedures and in providing leadership and guidance to the Board.
- Taking on other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Board Chair.

Guidelines for Effective Relationships

Trustee Relationships

- Openness – Communication in an open, honest manner is critical to success. Personal or hidden agendas are to be brought forward for discussion. Be respectful and prepared to say in meetings what is said privately.
- Seek Consensus – Ideally, decisions will be made by finding common ground and using the consensus approach whenever possible. Consensus decision-making operates best in an environment based on trust, patience, good nature and being non-judgmental. Once a decision is made it is a decision of the corporate board. All Trustees will support the decision of the Board to the public.
- Consideration – Be respectful of the start and end times of meetings. Be prepared for the meeting. Speak clearly, concisely, and with complete details, in a manner that is understood. At meetings of the Board, Trustees will direct all comments and questions through the chair to the fellow Trustees.
- Responsiveness – Be considerate of community needs, encouraging the community to become more involved in public education.
- Adherence – If any Trustee believes another Trustee is not adhering to the guidelines in this policy, they should follow the process outlined in the Trustee Code of Ethical Conduct Policy.

Trustee and Staff Relationships

- Management Team – Trustees and staff operate as a management team. This requires an environment of trust, confidentiality, patience and responsiveness. As a result of working together, all Trustees will be treated equally and will be well informed.
- Openness – Trustees and staff are open, honest and freely share information.
- Protocols – Staff should feel free to contribute to discussions in closed meetings. In public meetings staff will contribute to discussions at the request of the Chair. Any criticisms will be raised in private. All individuals must be considerate of time as it relates to punctuality and brevity.
- Accountability – The Superintendent is accountable to the Board. The Superintendent must be prepared to set the example of presenting and owning the solution to identified problems and issues. All other staff are accountable to the Superintendent.
- Adherence – In relation to the above, should any Trustee believe another member is not adhering to these expectations, they should follow the process outlined in the Trustee Code of Ethical Conduct Policy.

Date of Board Approval: February 2009 (Policy 4, 6, and 7 consolidated in this policy)

Date Amended: November 19, 2019
May 21, 2024

Legal Reference: School Act, Section 50

Cross Reference: Governance: Trustee Code of Ethical Conduct Policy
Governance: Board Meeting Procedures Policy
Human Resources: Safe, Caring and Respectful Workplaces Policy
School Administration: Safe, Caring and Respectful Schools Policy