

2155 Board Authority and Responsibilities

Policy 2155

STATUS: ADOPTED

BOARD AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board Approved and Issued: February 1971

Last Revised: June 19, 2013

Description:

The authority and responsibilities of individual trustees does not extend to the enactment of the policies which they have adopted by the Board as a whole. The role of trustees, as with any elected individual, is to act collectively, not individually. Individual members have no status as, and shall not attempt to act as, administrators of the district. Rather, when matters arise where trustees are prevailed upon to provide opinion, the position of the Board as a whole will be expressed.

Individual Board members may not represent the authority of the Board on matters that have not been previously approved by the Board as a whole.

Board members shall be fully informed by the superintendent or secretary treasurer, and provided with all data necessary to inform their judgment and support the proper casting of their votes on all matters requiring action. While administrative and educational duties will be delegated, governing powers will be rigorously retained for action by the Board.

BOARD AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board Approved: FEBRUARY 1971

Last Revised: June 19, 2013

Description:

TRUSTEE CODE OF ETHICS

The members of a Board of Education are elected by local residents to govern public education within their district. The Board is a political entity having only those rights, powers, duties and authorities set forth in the School Act.

In the interest of sound, consensual decisions, the Board of Education for School District No. 59 (Peace River South) expressly encourages the open exchange of individual opinions by members of the Board.

For the effective and efficient operation of School District No. 59 (Peace River South), it is desirable that all Trustees adhere to the following code of ethics:

1. Trustees shall act in the best interest of the District as a whole and not for any particular area or group;
2. Trustees shall express individual opinions at appropriate Board forums during which the opinions of other members of the Board may also be heard;
3. Trustees shall not engage in debate which may question the integrity or good faith of other trustees, or of the Board as a whole;
4. Trustees shall respect the decisions of the majority and support those actions which flow from Board resolutions. A vote in the negative shall not absolve a member of the Board from their duty to support the majority. Once a decision has been taken after full consideration of the Board, a member of the Board should desist from further debate, at that time, on the understanding that topics may always be reintroduced at a later date.
5. Trustees, because their effectiveness is dependent upon public trust, shall not place themselves in a potential conflict of interest situation by engaging in any type of business relationship with the Board. A Trustee must abstain from voting in the event that he/she has a conflict of interest by reason of having a direct pecuniary interest in a vote.
6. Trustees should respect the position of the Chairperson as the spokesperson of the Board in matters which have received Board ratification.

Such code of ethics does not prevent a Trustee from acting as a concerned citizen, nor does it deny the right to express concerns but it does require that opposition be expressed in a responsible manner within the context of the Board meeting as a whole. Professional persons, regardless of the capacity in which they speak, are bound at all times to conduct themselves in accordance with their profession's code of ethics. No less should be expected of an elected member of a corporate public body.

In matters of supreme conscience, a Trustee may resign from a Board in order to express

opposition. Democracy requires that the opinion of the majority be respected. In the case of a corporate entity such as a School Board, it is particularly necessary that Trustees recognize this as needed for the effective operation of the school system. In cases of extreme breach of the above code of ethics, the Board may express its condemnation of the actions of a Trustee through a vote of censure by resolution of the Board passed by an affirmative vote of at least 4 of 7 Trustees.

Confidential information pertaining to property, medical and disciplinary matters that relate to personnel, individual students, legal actions, and labour relation matters discussed during in-camera meetings of the Board shall not be published or divulged by any Trustee to members of the public or media and if such information is so published or divulged by any Trustee, the Board may express its condemnation of the actions of the Trustee through a vote of censure by resolution of the Board passed by an affirmative vote of at least 4 of 7 Trustees. Individual Trustees who violate confidentiality may be liable for any legal costs and damages that may result from the breach of confidentiality.

Board Meetings:

In order that board meetings will be effective, a Trustee should:

- have a reasonable knowledge of the conduct of meetings and rules of order
- have a full understanding of the content of the meeting through a full review of the information provided by the secretary treasurer
- participate constructively in discussions, confining remarks to the matter under discussion and thus expediting the meeting
- provide individuals and delegations appearing before the board respectful hearings

Committees:

Each member of the board should accept his/her assignment to working committees willingly and be prepared to carry out his/her fair share of committee work.

Representation:

The Board member should:

- accept his/her share of public appearances on behalf of the board
- be careful to always present the Board's view and not only his/her own
- at all times promote interest in and support for the Board of Education and the public schools

SCHOOL BOARD POWERS AND DUTIES

The Board shall concern itself primarily with broad questions of policy rather than administrative tasks to be performed by the Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary-Treasurer who shall be held responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the entire school system.

The Board, functioning within the framework of the School Act, and recognizing the authority of the Province, fulfills its responsibilities by executing their duties as follows:

1. Establishing policy;
2. Approving locally developed curricula and provides instructional aids;
3. Consulting on the appointment of senior staff members;
4. Approving the budget and policies whereby the administration may formulate procedures and regulations for the orderly accomplishment of business;
5. Estimating and seeking to provide funds for the operation, support, maintenance, improvement and ongoing development of the school system;
6. Providing for planning, expansion, improvement, financing, construction, maintenance, use and disposition of physical plants of the school system;
7. Establishing goals and objectives for the educational program in the District;
8. Establishing practices for the dissemination of information relating to the schools, necessary for maintaining a well-informed public;
9. Performing all other duties and responsibilities as outlined in the School Act and Regulations.
10. Maintaining liaison with the Parent Advisory Councils and School Planning Councils of their assigned schools.