

## ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

The Board consists of nine (9) trustees. Four (4) trustees are elected from the city of Coquitlam, two (2) from each of the cities of Port Coquitlam and Port Moody; and one from the villages of Anmore and Belcarra.

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate in order to achieve its mission and goals related to student success and the development of an improved learning environment. The oath of office taken by each trustee when he or she assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education.

The School Act gives no individual authority to trustees. As members of the corporate board, trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the Board, and for the delivery and quality of educational services. A trustee must serve the community as an elected representative, but the trustee's primary task is to act as a member of a corporate board.

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 that is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the District.

Trustees bring a range of skills, experience, knowledge, values, beliefs and opinions to their role. Their background does not necessarily include teaching, administration, or any other aspect of education. Their diversity ensures that Board processes are truly democratic and contributes to good decision-making. This diversity also helps trustees provide a balance between the interests of a broader community and the interests of those involved in the delivery of education.

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.

1. The District will offer an orientation program prior to January 31 after an election for all elected trustees that provides information on:
  - 1.1 Role of the trustee and the Board;
  - 1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the District;
  - 1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
  - 1.4 Existing District initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements, and long-range plans;
  - 1.5 District programs and services;
  - 1.6 Board's function as an appeal body; and

- 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
2. The District will provide financial support for trustees to attend British Columbia School Trustees' Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the District's orientation program for newly elected trustees.
4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about functions, policies, and procedures.

### **Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees**

1. Become familiar with District policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
2. Participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of students within the District.
3. Support the decisions of the Board and monitor progress to ensure decisions are implemented.
4. Refer queries, or issues and problems not covered by Board policy, to the Board for corporate discussion, decision or delegation.
5. Refer queries, issues or problems raised by a parent or community member about a teacher or classroom, to the teacher or about a principal or a school, to the principal and, where appropriate, inform the Superintendent or designate.
6. Bring to the attention of the Board any issues that may significantly affect the District, and interpret the needs of the community to the Board.
7. Exercise authority within defined limits when delegated such responsibility.
8. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so the quality of leadership and service in the District is enhanced.
9. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow trustees at the Board meeting immediately following a trustee development activity.
10. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
11. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the District.
12. Act as a liaison to assigned school for the following purposes and in consultation with the school principal:
  - 12.1 To engage with the School Principal
  - 12.2 To represent the Board when a Board representative is desired at school functions;
  - 12.3 To provide increased opportunity for trustee to become more knowledgeable about the District's schools and student learning;
13. A Trustee will not be a liaison to a school in which their child or grandchild is enrolled.
14. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Ethics.

Legal Reference: Section 50, School Act

Board Minutes

October 1980 Volume 22 Page 162 Policy I-A-31 Orientation Program for Newly Elected/Appointed Trustees

June 2005 Volume 47 Page 78 Policy 3 Role of the Trustee

February 2006 Volume 48 Page 18

April 9, 2019 Board Meeting