

ROLE OF THE BOARD MEMBER

Board members play a pivotal role in guiding the Board towards achieving its mission and goals. Their contribution is especially significant because the Board recognizes that internal leadership and guidance greatly enhance its capability to meet obligations.

The Board functions as a corporation, and its decisions during official meetings represent the corporation's stance. While a Board member, granted corporate authority, can act on the Board's behalf, they do so as its representative. Consequently, their actions are viewed as actions of the Board, making the Board accountable for them. However, when acting individually, a Board member possesses the same authority and status as any other citizen within the Division.

Two key principles guide Board members:

Board Solidarity: This principle emphasizes that those serving on the Board must publicly uphold and support its decisions in both speech and action.

Fiduciary Duty or Duty of Loyalty: Board members are entrusted to act with honesty and prioritize the division's interests. They must maintain loyalty to the organization they represent, avoiding any personal conflicts of interest. Alongside this, they are bound by a Duty of Care. This means they are expected to act with the same care, diligence, and skill as any prudent individual would in similar situations.

Furthermore, the Board's composition can change due to elections. To ensure a seamless transition and maintain consistency, incoming Board members should be thoroughly oriented about existing policies, practices, statutory mandates, ongoing initiatives, and plans.

1. The Division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected Board members that provides information on:
 - 1.1 Role of the Board member and the Board;
 - 1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
 - 1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
 - 1.4 Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
 - 1.5 Division 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 Division will provide financial support for Board members to attend Saskatchewan School Boards Association sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The Board Chair and Director are responsible for developing and implementing the Division's orientation program for newly elected Board members. The Director shall provide each Board member with access to the Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.
4. Incumbent Board members are encouraged to help newly elected Board members become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

The Board member shall:

1. Become familiar with and adhere to Division policies, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
2. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
3. Refer administrative matters to the Director. The Board member, upon receiving a complaint from a parent or community member about school operations, will refer the parent or community member back to the school and will inform the Director of this action.
4. Keep the Board and the Director informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the Division.
5. Provide the Director with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the Board member's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
6. Attend meetings of the Board; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the Division.
7. Inform the Board Chair in a timely manner if unable to attend a board meeting. The absent board member is responsible for becoming informed of the proceedings.
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.
9. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
10. Participate in Board/Board member development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.

It is expected that GSSD Board Members prioritize attendance at the Saskatchewan School Board Association (SSBA) and Public Section Meetings, which include the Fall General Assembly and Spring Assembly, to effectively represent the Board. These gatherings are pivotal for acquiring sector knowledge, enhancing governance skills, and networking with trustees from various school divisions. The costs associated with attending these meetings will be accounted for separately from the Trustee Professional Development (PD) funds and will be supported by the annual governance budget, subject to its availability.

11. Share the materials and ideas gained from a Board member development activity with fellow Board members using the provided Board PD template at the next available opportunity.
12. Stay current with respect to provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.
13. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.
14. Attend significant Division or school functions when possible.
15. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Board Member Code of Ethics.
16. Report any violation of the Board Member Code of Ethics to the Board during an in-camera session.

Legal Reference: Section 63, 85, 87 Education Act

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