

Trustee Orientation Guide

2024



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
The Education System	3
Structure of System	3
Education Finance	3
Indicators of Effective Board Practice	4
Overview of the Good Spirit School Division	5
Foundational Statements	5
Statistics (as of September 30, 2024)	6
Enrolment Breakdown by School as of September 30, 2024.....	7
Educational Organizations	8
League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)	8
Ministry of Education	8
Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO)	9
Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB)	9
Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA)	9
Public Section	10
Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation (STF)	11
Trusteeship	12
Roles and Responsibilities.....	12
Trustees are Members of a Team	12
Getting Off to a Good Start	13
Be Prepared	13
Know Your Policy.....	13
You and the Director of Education	13
Personal Agendas	13
It’s the Law	13
Listen.....	14
You Can Make a Difference.....	14

The Education System

Structure of System

The Education Act, 1995 and its accompanying regulations provides a framework for K-12 education in Saskatchewan. It describes processes that occur within the education system such as organization and management of schools, hiring and firing of teachers, school finance, and collective bargaining.

There are 28 school divisions in the province. School divisions fall into three categories: public, separate and Francophone.

Unless a taxpayer has designated otherwise, his or her property taxes are directed to the public board of education in the area.

Members of the minority faith who have established a separate school division pay their taxes to the separate system.

The separate school divisions cover the same geographic areas as some of the public-school divisions. For example, most Saskatchewan cities have both a public and a separate school division.

The Conseil des écoles fransaskoises (CEF) covers many Francophone schools throughout Saskatchewan.

School divisions are governed by an elected board of education (school board).

The elected members of a board of education are officially known as “members of the board of education,” but in everyday language, they are often called school trustees.

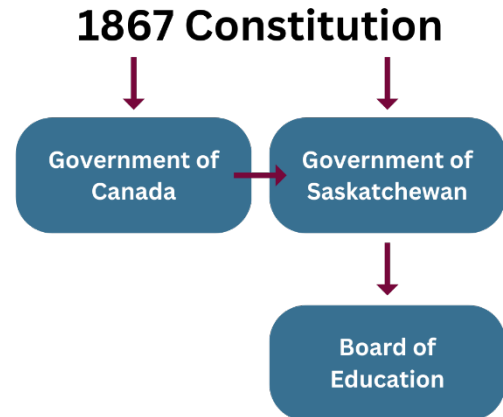
Section 140 of *The Education Act, 1995* sets out the terms and duties of school community councils which are primarily advisory. However, boards of education may delegate a wide range of responsibilities to school community councils.

Education Finance

School divisions are responsible for the operation of schools in their area and for the quality of the education program. Most of the money to operate schools comes from the provincial government.

Provincial grants to boards of education are provided through education funding.

The financial operations of the school division are carried out in a fiscal year that begins on September 1 and ends on August 31. The provincial budget release date is mid-March, annually.

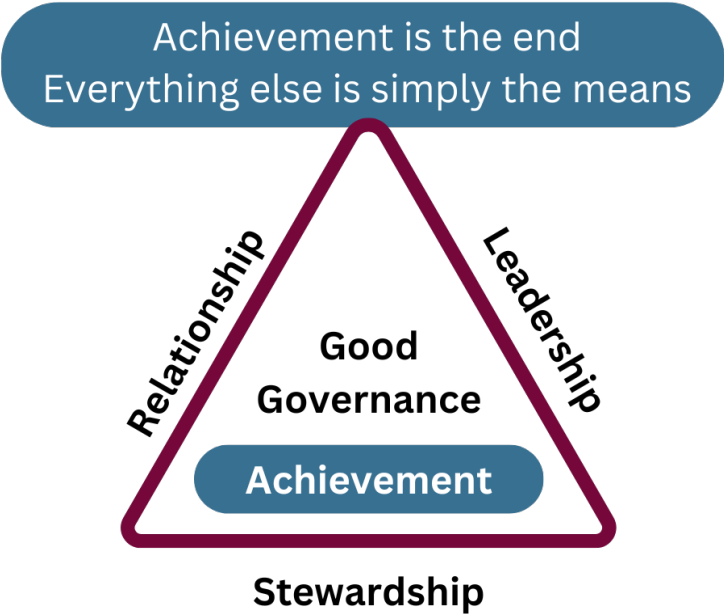


Indicators of Effective Board Practice

The Goals of Education for Saskatchewan provide a vision for the whole province. Most boards of education also develop a statement of vision, mission, and core values. These policy statements are part of defining what success looks like for the school division.

Good governance requires boards of education to:

- Provide leadership in developing plans that think creatively about the future of education in the school system.
- Demonstrate responsible stewardship through effective application of policy governance; and,
- Establish productive and successful relationships for the school system.



Overview of the Good Spirit School Division

Foundational Statements

[Click here](#) to view Board Policy 1 Foundational Statements

- Our Motto** Students Come First
- Our Mission** Building Strong Foundations to Create Bright Futures
- Our Vision** Learning Without Limits...Achievement for All
- Our Values** Belonging, Diversity, Learning, Perseverance and Responsibility

Our Aspirational Statements:

- **High Quality Teaching and Learning**
- **Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities**
- **Effective Policy and Procedures**
- **Healthy, Sustainable Physical and Social Environments**

Good Spirit School Division
Strategic Plan Overview 2024-2025

Students Come First
Belonging Diversity Learning Perseverance Responsibility

Our Vision
Learning Without Limits...
Achievement For All

Our Mission
Building Strong Foundations
to Create Bright Futures

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Improving student outcomes
- Implementing the "Inspiring Success" Policy
- Developing GSSD leaders
- Ensuring consistent practices across GSSD schools
- Delivering high-quality teaching and learning resources
- Providing equal access to technology

EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Upholding clear, high-quality Board of Education Policies
- Maintaining transparent, high-quality administrative procedures aligned with Board policy
- Focusing on educational approaches that prioritize student success
- Allocating resources to improve experiences for students, staff, and the community

ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

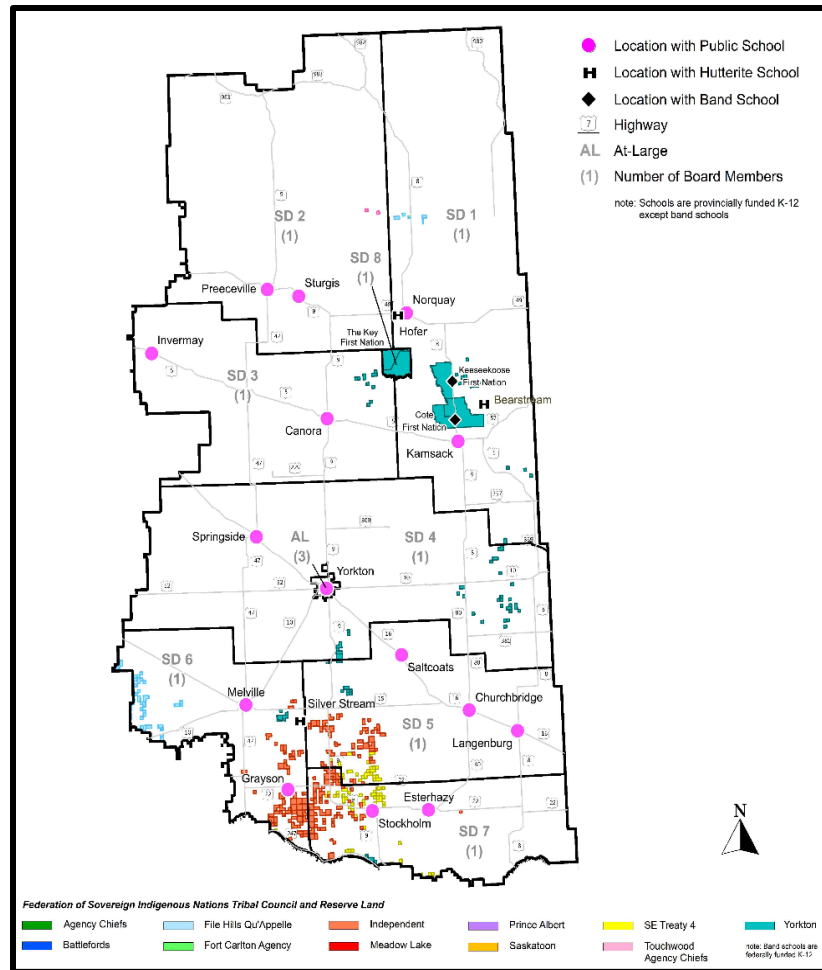
- Fostering connections and supporting transitions
- Valuing input from students, families, staff, and the community
- Communicating openly and clearly
- Forming partnerships to support GSSD's priority areas

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

- Enhancing mental health and well-being for students and staff
- Offering safe and inviting facilities
- Promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion

We acknowledge the land on which GSSD sits is Treaty Four Territory, signed September 1874 at Fort Qu'Appelle - the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Assiniboine and Metis Peoples. Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous Peoples both in the past and the present.

Division Map



Statistics (as of September 30, 2024)

Good Spirit School Division operates 27 schools in 15 communities

- The 27 schools include three Hutterian colony schools:
 - Bear Stream School is in the Clarion Colony; Clarion is displayed on the map
 - Silver Stream School, located in the Silver Stream Colony, is located approximately 70 km southeast of Yorkton
 - Hofer Colony School, is located 5 km west and 1 km south of Norquay

As of September 30, 2024, the number of students enrolled within GSSD is 6,313 (Kindergarten-Grade 12, Home Based Education and SaskDLC Full-Time Students).

There are 98 bus routes in GSSD: 92 rural routes, 6 routes within the cities of Melville and Yorkton

- The total kilometers driven per day are 20,940
- 3,000 students are transported daily; 200 of these students belong to Christ The Teacher Catholic Schools

The division employs

- 432 professional staff which includes teachers and professional service providers with teaching credentials: full time equivalency of 369.41
- 384 support staff
- 98 bus drivers

Enrolment Breakdown by School as of September 30, 2024

- Kindergarten – Grade 12 Enrolment
- Home Based Education
- SaskDLC Full-Time Students

School Name	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Totals
Bear Stream School	2	2	1	1	1	3	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	15
Canora Composite School	0	0	0	0	0	28	28	40	32	39	39	43	29	278
Canora Junior Elementary	25	27	37	29	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	139
Churchbridge Public School	7	18	17	13	12	10	23	21	13	19	19	8	14	194
Columbia School	31	37	28	33	30	29	25	36	27	0	0	0	0	276
Davison School	17	28	27	21	23	27	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	170
Dr. Brass School	20	16	18	19	21	29	22	24	19	0	0	0	0	188
Esterhazy High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	40	51	41	60	59	57	341
Grayson School	4	6	5	5	2	5	5	7	6	3	0	0	0	48
Hofer Colony School	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	13
Invermay School	4	4	9	9	9	4	8	7	5	9	6	6	8	88
Kamsack Comprehensive	0	0	0	0	0	26	26	34	33	39	33	35	41	267
Langenburg Central School	19	31	22	21	21	24	30	23	33	29	27	19	32	331
M.C. Knoll School	46	34	47	29	30	29	33	40	41	0	0	0	0	329
Macdonald School	10	9	13	12	11	14	14	13	10	14	0	0	0	120
Melville Comprehensive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	44	50	95	85	94	403
Miller School	16	18	14	15	14	21	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	117
Norquay School	15	34	13	30	14	20	29	22	16	28	22	8	18	269
P.J. Gillen School	31	44	57	42	34	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	258
Preeceville School	9	18	17	15	17	15	21	18	17	27	16	21	16	227
Saltcoats School	6	9	12	8	9	13	16	17	15	0	0	0	0	105
Silver Stream School	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	9
Springside School	13	10	12	7	17	15	7	12	20	0	0	0	0	113
Sturgis Composite School	14	13	11	13	11	12	9	17	13	16	10	14	15	168
Victoria School	24	32	33	33	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	160
Yorkdale Central School	62	32	54	58	58	50	51	55	46	0	0	0	0	466
Yorkton Regional High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	218	199	253	222	892
	378	425	450	416	394	427	429	462	443	535	528	551	546	5984

Good Spirit SD 204 Home	1	23	30	22	25	30	13	18	16	9	18	13	11	229
	379	448	480	438	419	457	442	480	459	544	546	564	557	6213
SaskDLC Full-time Students	0	3	1	1	4	2	4	5	7	12	15	15	31	100
	379	451	481	439	423	459	446	485	466	556	561	579	588	6313

Educational Organizations

League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)

The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS) is a professional association of educational administrators who work at the school division level.



Membership

All individuals who are employed by a board of education in a supervisory or administrative capacity and have an out-of-scope designation are required to be members of LEADS. Members include directors, assistant directors, superintendents, assistant superintendents, and other similar positions.

LEADS specify that its members must have certain training and experience and must meet other criteria. LEADS also:

- Provides professional development for its members such as a compulsory summer short course.
- Offers networking opportunities to its members and represents its members' interests in various forums.
- Administers the disciplinary powers that are an integral part of the legislation that created LEADS.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is the provincial department responsible for K-12 education. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring the quality of education in Saskatchewan. Key activities include:

- Developing curricula for all grade levels.
- Providing in-service to support curricula.
- Approving and recommending textbooks and resource material for use in the schools.
- Supervising independent schools and home-based education.
- Providing for teacher education.
- Administering legislation relating to education.
- Providing provincial grants to school divisions; and,
- Maintaining student records.



In addition to these responsibilities which are defined in the *The Education Act, 1995*, the Ministry of Education also provides leadership in several other areas. For example, it regularly conducts provincewide student and program evaluations.

The Ministry of Education is responsible to the Minister of Education. A deputy minister, assistant deputy minister and several executive directors administer the department. The Ministry head office is in Regina.

Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO)

Secretary-treasurers and certain administrators employed by school divisions are required to be members of SASBO. SASBO provides professional development and networking opportunities for its members.



Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB)

SPTRB is an independent organization charged with the responsibility of regulating the teaching profession in Saskatchewan.

SPTRB serves the public interest by ensuring registered teachers meet professional standards for certification, conduct and competence.



Within The Registered Teachers Act on July 1, 2015 the government of Saskatchewan granted the teachers of Saskatchewan the privilege of becoming a self-regulating profession.

Self-regulating professions are granted the authority to license and the ability to discipline licensees.

The licensing power is the authority to decide who shall be permitted to earn their living by the pursuit of a particular calling. This means that a self-regulating profession acts as gatekeeper to its profession in the assessment of the qualifications of prospective members. Once an individual becomes a member of a profession, the self-regulating profession has the power to regulate the conduct of the licensee by establishing rules of practice and standards of conduct enforceable through a discipline process.

Professions granted self-regulating status are charged with the responsibility not only to see that persons licensed are qualified, but that all qualified applicants are licensed. The public has a genuine and very real interest in knowing that the members of self-regulating professions are properly trained and have good ethical standards. That being so, it is the responsible and experienced members of a profession who are in the best position to set the standards and qualifications to be met by those wishing to practice the profession.

Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA)

Overview

The SSBA is a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in public education by providing leadership and services to Saskatchewan school boards. The Association represents all school boards in Saskatchewan.



School boards are elected to govern K-12 education in their school divisions and so are essential members of local government. They ensure that the wishes of the community are reflected in the community's schools and make decisions that shape the education of Saskatchewan's children. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association supports boards in their very important role.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association has served boards of education since 1915. It was

founded in that year under its previous name – the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association was incorporated by a special act of the legislature in 1952.

The current governance structure gives school boards multiple pathways for representation. The Provincial Executive of the Association consists of a President, Vice-President and 7 representatives. Seven constituencies are represented to include the following groups: The Catholic Section, Public Section, Conseil Scolaire Fransaskois, Aboriginal, and south, central, and northern boards.

Provincial Executive members are the Board of the Association and act as advocates for education, addressing local and provincial issues, and also represent the Association on various inter-organizational committees involved in education.

Advocacy, board member development and member services are the major activities of the Association.

Time is spent working with the government and opposition members of the legislative assembly, senior officials, other local governments, partners in education, agencies and bodies who can or do have an impact on school boards and publicly-funded education in Saskatchewan. A larger portion of the Association’s work is representative in nature and reflects the desire of boards of education to have the Association act as an advocate for boards of education in the service of children.

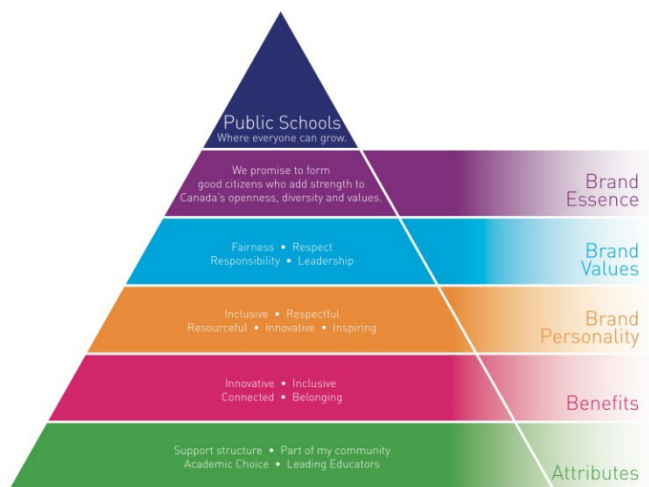
Public Section

The Public Section, also known as Public Schools of Saskatchewan, is a part of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) dedicated to advocating for the interests of public school divisions in Saskatchewan. It focuses on ensuring high-quality public education and seeks equitable treatment within the province's educational system by addressing key issues with the SSBA, government, and other educational partners. The Good Spirit School Division has previously had a board member serve as a Member-at-Large for Public Section.



Member Boards for Public Section:

- Chinook School Division No. 211
- Creighton School Division No. 111
- Good Spirit School Division No. 204
- Horizon School Division No. 205
- Living Sky School Division No. 202
- Lloydminster School Division No. 99
- North East School Division No. 200
- Northwest School Division No. 203
- Prairie South School Division No. 210
- Prairie Spirit School Division No. 206
- Prairie Valley School Division No. 208
- Regina School Division No. 4
- Saskatchewan Rivers School Division No. 119
- Saskatoon School Division No. 13
- South East Cornerstone School Division No. 209
- Sun West School Division No. 207



The Public Section unites these divisions to advocate for strong public education in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) is a professional organization that serves and represents teachers. Teachers must belong to the STF as a condition of employment.



The structure of the STF follows the general pattern of government in Saskatchewan. Teachers in constituencies (local associations) select representatives who form a teachers' parliament (Council), which is the major policy-making body of the federation. A cabinet (Executive) presides over the affairs of the organization and a full-time staff implements policy decisions.

The STF offers its members a wide range of comprehensive services including teacher welfare and professional development services.

The Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation is a member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). The CTF is a national organization comprised of provincial teachers' associations. It provides a national voice for teachers.

Trusteeship

Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides detailed listings of items that boards are responsible for. Ultimately, however, boards of education are responsible not for buildings, bargaining, budgets or buses, but for results.

Boards of education are responsible for realizing the Goals of Education, for ensuring that children in their community stay in school and achieve at high levels. They are responsible for ensuring that local schools reflect the community's values and expectations. The many duties and powers listed in *The Education Act, 1995* are means to these ends.

Many aspects of the education system are in the provincial sphere and beyond the direct control of boards of education. These include teacher salaries and benefits, teacher certification, some elements of the school program, and occupational health and safety regulations.

Boards of education do have a mandate for many aspects of education, however. These include the organizational culture of the school division, the quality of the teachers and principals they hire, some aspects of the instructional program, and issues that are bargained locally such as sabbatical and educational leave for teachers. By directing their energies into those elements they can control, boards can help ensure success for all students.

Boards of education govern by creating policies and setting goals and then holding directors of education, principals and other staff responsible for implementing policies and achieving goals. Boards of education don't become involved in the day-to day elements of school operations such as supervision of teachers or support staff, ordering equipment and supplies, or establishing timetables and schedules. All of the tasks are the job of paid staff.

Most importantly, school trustees are elected members of boards of education and play a very important role in their communities.

Trustees are Members of a Team

Individual board members are members of a team – the board of education. Only the team has authority. Individual board members cannot make decisions or take action on behalf of the school division. Only the board of education can act.

Getting Off to a Good Start

The board of education is responsible for overseeing the operation of the school division. Having this responsibility does not mean that board members have to know how to teach school, administer a building, or develop a curriculum.

It does mean that each board member must carefully read material on a variety of subjects prepared by the staff, draw preliminary conclusions from the reading, and be ready to ask clarifying questions during board meeting discussions before voting on each agenda item. It does mean that the board must be prepared to articulate the vision, mission and goals that will guide the work of the school division staff.

Be Prepared

Prepare for board meetings by reading all the materials before the meeting. In some cases, the material will contain information and educational terms unfamiliar to you. When this happens, keep a note pad on hand and jot down questions when they come up. Once you've read all the materials contact either the board chair or the director to discuss your questions. When topics come up for discussion at the board meeting, jot down additional questions that are not answered to your satisfaction and ask questions before voting. Listen to and get involved in the discussions and keep asking questions until you understand the issue.

Know Your Policy

Review board policies and the administrative procedures used in the division. Don't expect to read everything in one sitting but refer to these as questions or concerns arise. Take notes about particular areas needing clarification or which are of concern to you. Discuss these questions and concerns with the director to get their perspective. As board and division operations become more familiar, it may become apparent that some policies need to be changed or clarified. Find out when the board reviews policies and what the process is for revisions.

You and the Director of Education

Building a mutually supportive relationship between the board and director is essential for a successful and effective school system. If the working relationship between the board and the administration is not good, the entire division will suffer and the educational program will not be a priority. If there is a general lack of support of the director, the director deserves fair treatment, honest and open evaluations, and a chance to improve the situation. Board members who want to change administrators and hope that the perfect director will apply will probably be disappointed. The board, not the individual members, needs to give direction to the administration about what it wants done.

Personal Agendas

Everyone has "personal agendas." However, personal agendas that waste board time and interfere with the division's operation can be a problem. New board members need to be honest about their concerns, but it should not be a surprise if the rest of the board will not support these concerns at the very first meeting. In most cases, new members will find it wise to wait a few months before beginning any campaigns to change things. Board members who are patient, who thoroughly study the issues and who support their arguments with convincing evidence may succeed in turning campaign issues into board issues sometime during their first term.

It's the Law

Conduct legal board meetings. The board meeting is where the board accomplishes its work. Meetings must be public, approve motions and maintain appropriate minutes. Ask your director or Association staff for ideas about working within the law.

Listen

Handle complaints professionally. Be prepared to hear a lot of opinions and problems from the public. Being familiar with board policy and procedure will help to answer specific questions, but many complaints from the public will be difficult to handle. The best advice is to listen and thank the person for calling. Encourage the person to talk to the division employee who can help them with the problem. Resist the urge to promise that "something will be done."

You Can Make a Difference

People run for office because they want to make a difference and can become overwhelmed by all the restrictions placed on a school division. Take the time to learn about the division. Be patient, persistent and keep in mind that the public has entrusted you, together with your fellow board members, the responsibility to ensure that each child in your division is served.

Reference:

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2009, *The Way Things Work: An Orientation for New Board Members*