

Board Development Topic: Governance Skill Development

Date of Board Meeting:

December 12, 2024

Strategic Priority:

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

Quality Indicator(s):

- QI 1.1 - Facilitating environments where students feel a sense of belonging and have high levels of intellectual engagement.
- QI 2.1 - Analyzing student achievement and ensuring the development of action plans to address concerns and gaps.
- QI 4.1 - Developing budgets following the Board's budget framework and aligned with the Division's Strategic Plan.
- QI 6.1 - Ensuring that Board policy is adhered to.
- QI 6.2 - Demonstrating knowledge of and respect for the role of the Board in policy processes.
- QI 6.3 - Providing administrative services, including policy research services required by the Board.

Information for the Board (10 fast facts):

1. Strategic Decision-Making:

- Effective governance ensures that Board decisions align with the division's vision, mission, and strategic priorities. Trustees evaluate data, stakeholder input, and long-term implications to make informed decisions that promote student success, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement. This includes regular review and alignment with the division's foundational statements.

2. Conflict Resolution:

- Building skills to navigate conflicts positively and constructively promotes a collaborative and unified Board. Trustees must foster open communication, active listening, and mutual respect to address disagreements. Conflict resolution begins with trust and the ability to be honest while prioritizing the division's goals over individual interests. Tools like mediation, professional development, and shared agreements can support this process.

3. Team Building:

- Strengthening trust and relationships within the Board enhances decision-making and the Board's overall effectiveness. Through regular retreats, workshops, and social interactions, trustees build rapport and a shared vision. Effective team building fosters a culture of collaboration, respect, and unity, even when facing complex challenges.

4. **Role Clarity:**

- Trustees focus on governance, not management, by setting direction and overseeing outcomes, while administration manages day-to-day operations. This allocation ensures that the Board remains strategic, while superintendents and school staff handle operational matters. Trustees focus on policy development, accountability, and resource allocation rather than micromanagement.

5. **Policy Oversight:**

- Board policies guide the division's operations and are a key tool for governance, accountability and transparency. Trustees are responsible for reviewing, updating, and approving policies to ensure they are aligned with provincial regulations, divisional goals, and emerging needs. Clear and well-communicated policies provide consistency and accountability for all stakeholders.

6. **Equity and Inclusion:**

- Promoting equity and inclusion at the governance level reflects the division's commitment to ensuring all students, staff, and families feel valued and respected. This involves actively addressing barriers to equity, fostering inclusive practices, and modeling respect for diversity. It aligns with GSSD Board Policy 20 - Respect for Human Diversity and includes regular evaluation of division practices to promote equitable outcomes.

7. **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- Governance decisions should always support the division's strategic plan and long-term goals. Trustees must ensure that resources, policies, and initiatives are aligned with the priorities outlined in the strategic plan, such as improving student achievement, fostering well-being, and advancing innovation. Progress should be monitored regularly through measurable benchmarks.

8. **Effective Communication:**

- Transparent, concise, and respectful communication builds trust between the Board, division administration, and the broader community. Trustees should establish clear channels for sharing information, listening to stakeholders, and providing updates on Board actions. Communication should reinforce the Board's commitment to accountability and openness.

9. **Risk Management:**

- The Board's role includes identifying and mitigating risks through annual reviews and informed decision-making. Trustees should analyze risks related to finances, operations, governance, and reputational issues.

10. **Continuous Improvement:**

- Ongoing governance training ensures trustees are prepared to address emerging challenges and opportunities effectively. Professional development sessions, mentorship programs, and regular evaluations help trustees stay informed about best practices, legislative changes, and evolving educational needs. This commitment to learning fosters resilience, adaptability, and informed decision-making.

Respectfully submitted,

Quintin M. Robertson, Director/CEO
Good Spirit School Division