

TITLE: BOARD GOVERNANCE

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish principles for Board governance to encourage and support effective Board decision-making.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

- 2.1 **Board** means the Board of Trustees of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.2 **Trustee** means a member of the Board elected or appointed in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act and the Education Act*. Student trustees are elected by the Student Senate and Students' President Council to represent the interests of students on the Board.
- 2.3 **Board Governance** is the way in which the Board provides leadership, stewardship and oversight of the school district and its resources.
- 2.4 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.5 **Upholding** means to respect and to ask for respect for Board decisions as an expression of collective community democratic will.
- 2.6 **Monitoring** refers to the process whereby the Board of Trustees oversee the progress of District goals, policies, priorities and performance targets to determine if they are on-schedule and meeting the pre-set objective.
- 2.7 **Governance Commitments** are the expression of values and beliefs to which the Board subscribes in the undertaking of its duties.
- 2.8 **Guiding Principles** are value statements that guide, influence, direct or support any action, decision or practice to which they are related.

3.0 POLICY

Governance Commitments

- 3.1 The Board recognizes that it is bound by all applicable laws.
- 3.2 The Board is committed to providing leadership and good governance to benefit public education, and is mindful of the impact of its decisions on individual communities and society at large.
- 3.3 The Board shall focus decision-making on the educational outcomes of student achievement and well-being, and support programs and services that seek to provide equity of access and successful outcomes for all students.
- 3.4 The Board shall maintain a strategic focus on the work of the District and shall govern with long term vision.
- 3.5 The Board is committed to transparency, ensuring compliance with legislative requirements and making every reasonable effort to hold all deliberations, debate and decision-making in public.
- 3.6 The Board is committed to ensuring an effective Board culture of collaboration, respect, trust, candor and open expression of diverse and divergent viewpoints.
- 3.7 The Board shall render all decisions with integrity, based on available facts, and in the best interests of the entire district without undue influence from individuals or special interest groups.
- 3.8 The Board shall engage in board professional development to increase the collective capacity of the Board as a whole.
- 3.9 The Board recognizes that there is a division of responsibility between the Board and the Director of Education as the Chief Executive Officer (see section 4.0).

Guiding Principles

- 3.10 When setting policy direction and making decisions the Board shall be guided by the following principles:
 - a) Making students the primary focus and ensuring the District's schools and programs meet the diverse educational needs of students in their communities;
 - b) Ensuring equity, accessibility and fairness of learning opportunities;
 - c) Recognizing, valuing, and celebrating the diversity of its community;
 - d) Considering the input of students, parents, staff and the wider community as appropriate through a meaningful consultation process;
 - e) Making efficient, effective and innovative use of its resources, based on sound planning and best available information;

- f) Fostering vital and mutually beneficial relationships between schools, the populations they serve and the communities in which they are situated; and
- g) Being professional, transparent, and acting with integrity and respect for all.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

Responsibility

- 4.1 The Board is responsible for promoting student achievement and well-being; ensuring effective stewardship of the board's resources; and ensuring the delivery of effective and appropriate education programs to its students.

Policy Development and Monitoring

- 4.2 The Board shall develop and maintain policies and make decisions that promote the goals of student achievement and well-being, stewardship of resources, and effective program delivery and encourages students to pursue their educational goals. The Board shall monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its policies, directions and priorities in achieving the Board's goals and the efficiency of the implementation of these policies. The Board shall monitor the extent to which the direction, policies and priorities it has set have been met.

Multi-Year Planning

- 4.3 The Board shall consult with parents, students, supporters and employees in the development of a multi-year plan aimed at achieving the goals of student achievement and well-being, stewardship of resources, and effective program delivery and encourages students to pursue their educational goals. The plan shall include measures with respect to the allocation of resources to improve student outcomes. The Board shall annually review the plan with the Director of Education and ensure that the plan and progress reports on implementation of the plan are brought to the attention of parents, students, supporters and employees of the Board.

Director Evaluation

- 4.4 The Board shall monitor and evaluate the performance of the Board's Director of Education in accordance with its policies and have regard for his or her duties under the *Education Act*.

Board/Director Relations

- 4.5 The Board shall realize the potential of an effective Board-Director relationship; exercise its right to delegate authority to the Director for operational management; monitor the extent to which the direction, policies and priorities it has set have been met; and conduct annual performance appraisals of the Board and the Director.

Communication

- 4.6 The Board shall ensure effective communication with the community. It shall ensure the sharing of information on the activities and events taking place in the District, as well as the policies, procedures and decisions adopted by the Board. The Chair of the Board is the only spokesperson for the Board.

Stewardship of Resources

- 4.7 The Board shall demonstrate fiscal accountability and effectively use the resources entrusted to it for the purposes of delivering effective and appropriate education in a manner that upholds public confidence.

Advocacy

- 4.8 The Board shall make every effort to increase Board influence through political advocacy.

Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members

- 4.9 Board members are publicly elected and ultimately bear responsibility to the community as a whole.
- 4.10 Board members are responsible for bringing community members' concerns forward to the attention of the Board and balance their responsibility to the community with their duties as members of the board, collectively making decisions in the interests of all students.
- 4.11 Board members shall make themselves aware of the legislative, policy and operational requirements of the school board, and to be aware of current and emerging issues.
- 4.12 Board members shall respect the dignity of their office and shall not use their position for personal advantage or advancement.
- 4.13 Board members shall review agenda materials, arrive on time, regularly attend Board and committee meetings to which they have been appointed, and participate to the best of their ability.
- 4.14 Board members shall respect their colleagues and shall not contribute to unproductive debate or actions.
- 4.15 Once a decision has been reached by the Board, each member shall uphold the decision. Members are expected to be able to explain the rationale for a Board decision as required.
- 4.16 Board members shall respect and maintain confidences and confidential information.
- 4.17 Board members shall manage community communications effectively and diligently respond to requests for information.
- 4.18 Board members shall entrust the day to day management of the District to its staff through the Director of Education.
- 4.19 Board members shall comply with the Board's Code of Conduct.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair of the Board

- 4.20 In addition to any other duties under the *Education Act*, the Chair shall:
- a) Preside over meetings of the Board;

- b) Conduct the meetings in accordance with the Board's procedures and practices for the conduct of board meetings;
- c) Establish agendas for Board meetings, in consultation with the Director of Education and, as appropriate, the Vice-Chair of the Board, and a duly appointed Board member or alternate;
- d) Ensure that members of the Board have the information needed for informed discussion of the agenda items;
- e) Act as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the board, unless otherwise determined by the board;
- f) Convey the decisions of the Board to the Director of Education;
- g) Provide leadership to the Board in maintaining the Board's focus on its mission and vision; and
- h) Assume such other responsibilities as may be specified by the Board.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Education

- 4.21 The Director of Education is responsible for and accountable to the Board for the effective functioning of the school system in accordance with the strategic priorities and policies established by the Board and with any relevant statutory or regulatory requirements.
- 4.22 The Director of Education shall:
- a) Provide educational leadership to the District and advising and counseling the Board on all educational matters;
 - b) Maintain a strategic focus and managing policy implementation;
 - c) Enhance communications and community relations;
 - d) Manage human resources and professional development;
 - e) Demonstrate fiscal accountability; and
 - f) Demonstrate a strong relationship with provincial officials, including advocacy for the District's needs.
- 4.23 In addition to his or her other duties under the *Education Act*, the Director of Education shall:
- a) Annually review with the Board the multi-year plan;
 - b) Ensure that the multi-year plan establishes the Board's priorities and identifies specific measures and resources that shall be applied in achieving those priorities and in carrying out duties and responsibilities for student achievement;
 - c) Implement and monitor the implementation of the multi-year plan;

- d) Act as Secretary to the Board;
- e) Bring to the attention of the Board any act or omission by the Board that may result in a contravention of the *Education Act* or any policy, guideline or regulation made under the *Education Act*, and
- f) If the Board does not respond in a satisfactory manner to an act or omission brought to its attention, advise the Deputy Minister of Education of the act or omission.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Education Act of Ontario and Regulations under the Education Act

Bylaws and Standing Rules

Policy P.073.GOV: Board Member Code of Ethics

Policy P.025.GOV: Board Member Conflict of Interest

Policy P.130.GOV: Evaluation Process for the Board of Trustees

Policy P.051.GOV: Evaluation of Director of Education and Secretary of the Board

Policy P.001.GOV: Policy Development and Management

Policy P.110.GOV: Consultation by the Board, Schools and School Councils with Constituent Groups and the Wider Community

Policy P.114.GOV: Advocacy

Policy P.006.HR: Delegation of Authority – Human Resources

Policy P.007.FIN: Signing Authority and Spending Controls

Job Description for Board Member

Job Description for Director of Education and Secretary of the Board