

### ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustees are elected in accordance with the Local Authorities Election Act.

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. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership.

Alberta's Catholic schools exist to offer families a distinct education that is based on the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. The trustees of this division are empowered by the community to fulfill both the educational requirements set forth by Alberta Education and the vision of the faith community.

This presents Catholic trustees with a unique, dual challenge. They must ensure that students are provided an education which meets or exceeds the goals of Alberta Education and at the same time, ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected at all times in its policies and practices.

As leaders in the faith community, Catholic trustees require an understanding, a willingness to grow and a commitment to bearing daily witness to the faith. To meet this challenge, Catholic trustees are entrusted with certain denominational school rights, powers and privileges enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. They exercise these rights with the religious guidance of parish and diocesan authorities.

The Board is a corporation. 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, which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the division.

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 division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected trustees that provides information on:
  - 1.1 Role of the trustee 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;
  - 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest; and
  - 1.8 Services and Materials provided to trustees (See Policy 3 - Appendix A).
2. The division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) and Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) sponsored orientation seminars.
  3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee 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 trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.
  5. The trustee shall, at the time of assuming office, take and subscribe to the official oath and deposit it with the Secretary-Treasurer.

#### Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The trustee shall:

1. Upon assuming office, pledge to, and sign, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
2. Know and understand Board policies and the legislation reference in the policy (Section 76 and 80-91 of the *School Act*), and become familiar with Administrative Procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.
3. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
4. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint from a parent, community member or School Council representative about school operations, will refer the parent, community member or School Council representative to the appropriate contact as expressed in *Policy 3, Appendix B: Communications Protocol for Holy Spirit Catholic School Division*, and will inform the Superintendent of this action.
5. Keep the Board and the Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the division.
6. Provide the Superintendent with counsel and advice, through the Board Chair, given the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
7. Attend meetings of the Board, unless unable to do so because of illness or other unavoidable causes; 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.

8. The trustee shall model the values and requirements of a practicing Catholic and participate in parish and church activities through a personal lifestyle that reflects the teachings of the Church.
9. Ensure that Catholic values and principles are reflected at all times in the Board's policies and practices.
10. Support the majority decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the majority decision of the Board when it does not.
11. When delegated responsibility, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way. When further action following delegation to committee work is required, it will be undertaken according to the consensus of the corporate Board.
12. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the division can be enhanced.
13. Share the materials and ideas gained from a trustee development activity with fellow trustees at the next available opportunity.
14. Stay current with respect to provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.
15. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the division.
16. Attend significant division or school functions when possible.
17. Understand and adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct.
18. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board during a closed session.

**Legal Reference:** *Section 76, 80-91 School Act, RSA 2000 Oaths of Office Act*