



POLICY 3

Revised December 2025

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Section 34 of the *Education Act* outlines the role of the trustee. Further to this, the role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate to achieve its mission, vision, values, 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 in alignment with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

This presents Catholic trustees with a unique 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 always reflected in its policies and practices.

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.

1. Board Orientation

The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship. 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. All trustees are expected to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

The division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected trustees that encompasses an overview of the division, including method of operations, and provides information on:

- 1.1 Role of the trustee, Board, and the Superintendent;
 - 1.2 Organizational structures, facilities, and procedures of the division;
 - 1.3 Board policy, agendas, and minutes;
 - 1.4 Board Priorities, annual reports, budgets, financial statements, Infrastructure and Maintenance Renewal (IMR) and Capital plans, faith plan, 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 regarding conflict of interest;
 - 1.8 Services and materials provided to trustees (See Policy 3 - Appendix A);
 - 1.9 Trustee remuneration and expenses; and
 - 1.10 Most recent evaluation of the Board.
2. Financial support will be established for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA), and faith formation conferences and events as deemed necessary by the Board.
 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.

The trustee shall:

1. Model Catholic Values

Demonstrate the values and expectations of a practicing Catholic by participating in parish and church activities and living in a manner that reflects the teachings of the Church. Uphold

Catholic identity by ensuring that Catholic values and principles are consistently reflected in Board policies and practices. Review the Faith Plan to ensure alignment with the values of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division.

Trustees are representatives of the Division and must understand and comply with the Trustee Code of Conduct and report any violation of the Code to the Board Chair or, if applicable, the Vice Chair.

2. Provide for Integrated Strategic Governance and Development

The Board shall strengthen trustees' capacity to govern effectively by ensuring a comprehensive understanding of applicable policy and legislation, supporting ongoing professional development, and promoting active participation in strategic planning processes. Trustees are expected to integrate these elements into their governance responsibilities to make informed decisions, advance long-term divisional goals, and uphold effective, mission-aligned governance practices.

2.1 Understand Policy and Legislation:

Know and understand Board policies and all referenced legislation (including Sections 34 and 51 of the *Education Act*). Become familiar with administrative procedures, meeting agendas, and reports to effectively participate in Board business. Stay current with respect to provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.

2.2 Engage in Trustee Development:

Board and trustee development enhances leadership capacity and strengthens service to the division. Trustees deepen their understanding of the Board's role and their own responsibilities by reviewing Board policies; participating in professional learning opportunities; attending Board retreats and orientations; and making use of training and development resources offered by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), the Alberta Catholic Trustees' Association (ACSTA), the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association (CCSTA), and the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA).

2.3 Engage in Strategic Planning:

Provide overall direction for the division by establishing its mission, vision, and strategic priorities; approving the Annual Education Assurance Results Report and the Three-Year Education Plan; reviewing the Capital Plan and school calendars; and participating in the development of Board priorities that support long-term planning and the division's overall direction.

3. Attend Board and Committee Meetings

Facilitate effective governance through structured, informed, and collaborative decision-making. Committee work supports the Board by examining issues in greater depth, offering

recommendations, and enhancing the Board's ability to make well-informed decisions that promote the best possible outcomes for students and the division as a whole.

3.1 Provide Active Participation in Meetings of the Board:

Trustees provide clear direction to the Superintendent, aligning Board expectations with administrative implementation and ensure that decisions are well-informed, responsive, and aligned with the Division's mission and strategic priorities.

Trustees shall:

- 3.1.1 Communicate significant matters to the Board and the Superintendent in a timely and transparent manner, including any issues that may affect the division. When unable to attend a meeting, trustees must notify the Board Chair in accordance with the Trustee Code of Conduct.
- 3.1.2 Address governance matters appropriately by referring governance-related questions, issues, or concerns not covered by existing Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision. Trustees are expected to foster a positive learning and working culture within both the Board and the division.
- 3.1.3 Administrative matters shall be directed to the Superintendent. When a parent, community member, or school council representative brings forward a concern related to school operations, trustees shall refer the individual to the appropriate contact as outlined in Policy 3, Appendix B: *Communications Protocol for Holy Spirit Catholic School Division*.
- 3.1.4 Support the Superintendent by offering counsel and advice informed by their judgment, experience, and understanding of the community.
- 3.1.5 Fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities by reviewing financial information, asking informed questions, and providing input that supports the development of a responsible and sustainable division budget. Trustees shall review and approve the division budget and, when appropriate, seek feedback from Finance Committee members prior to approval. Trustees shall also review auditor reports, considering the input of Audit Committee members as applicable.
- 3.1.6 Support the work of the Policy Committee by reviewing draft and existing policies, offering feedback, and approving all policies ensuring that policies align with legislation, Board priorities, and the Catholic identity of the division.

- 3.1.7 Review operational reports - including personnel updates, director reports, and administrative procedures - provided for information purposes to ensure that division activities align with Board priorities, directives, and policies.
- 3.1.8 Share relevant learnings, materials, and insights gained through trustee activities to support collective governance capacity.
- 3.1.9 Support the decisions of the Board and avoid making statements that could be interpreted as representing the Board's corporate position when they do not.

3.2 Actively Engage in Committees of the Board:

At the annual Organizational Meeting, trustees shall select and participate in Standing Committees—internal subgroups that provide oversight and support strategic functions enhancing the Board's overall operations—as well as External Committees, which facilitate information exchange, discussion of shared issues, and collaborative dialogue with key partners. Trustees may also be appointed to ad hoc committees as required. Participation in these committees supports informed Board decision-making and advances outcomes that serve the best interests of students within the division.

When delegated a responsibility, trustees shall exercise the associated authority within defined limits and carry out their duties in a responsible, effective, and accountable manner.

4. Active Collaboration

Engage in active collaboration with fellow trustees, administration, and stakeholders to support effective governance, strengthen Board processes, enhance communication, advance shared goals, and contribute to collective decision-making.

4.1 Engage Parents, Students, and Community:

In alignment with Board engagement efforts, foster meaningful engagement of parents, students, and community members in matters related to education. School Leadership must invite Trustees to school events that include elected officials.

- 4.1.1 Trustees serving as school liaisons shall maintain a visible presence in their assigned school communities.

- 4.1.1.1 School Councils (Administrative Procedure 125) serve as a key link for parents and community members to advise the principal on school and administrative matters and to provide input to the Board on division policies, budgets, and governance issues. Liaison Trustees may attend school council meetings to receive input on governance-related matters, either when invited by the council chair or when the Board seeks community feedback. Invitations should specify the governance matter to

be discussed, ensuring that the Board's corporate position is accurately communicated. When possible, governance items should be placed at the start of the school council agenda.

4.1.1.2 Liaison Trustees should be invited to, and when possible, attend: School Masses; community events (concerts or plays), farewells and graduation ceremonies, awards, or recognition ceremonies.

- 4.1.2 Trustees shall participate, when possible, in Board-led engagement initiatives, including Council of School Councils sessions, budget consultation processes, and other community engagement opportunities as determined by the Board.
- 4.1.3 Trustees shall, when possible, attend division-wide events such as employee recognition ceremonies, retirement banquets, the Division Opening Mass, Division Spiritual Development Day, and extra-curricular school activities, to demonstrate support and involvement in the division's community.
- 4.1.4 Trustees shall respond to invitations from staff members and, when able, attend events such as the ATA Mass, social gatherings, or other staff-related activities.
- 4.1.5 Trustees shall advocate for the needs, priorities, and interests of the division, ensuring the local voice of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division is represented in provincial and federal discussions. Trustees are expected to attend, when possible, meetings with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Members of Parliament (MPs), and other elected officials.
- 4.1.6 Trustees shall foster positive relationships with bishops, priests, and other Church leaders and, when possible, attend meetings with Church authorities to advocate for the spiritual, educational, and community priorities of the division.

4.2 Engage in Provincial Advocacy:

Demonstrate effective advocacy through sustained engagement with the Alberta School Boards' Association (ASBA) and the Alberta Catholic Trustees Association (ACSTA). Attend and participate in zone and general membership meetings to ensure the Division's perspectives are clearly represented in provincial advocacy efforts.

References **Sections 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96 *Education Act***
Section 6, *Commissioner of Oaths Act*