
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 36 (SURREY)

No. 2100

POLICY: TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

This policy is designed to clarify the roles and conduct of members of the Board of Education. As a member of the Board of Education, democratically elected trustees are expected to govern in a fair and ethical manner and to be role models in the community.

Trustees fully acknowledge the critical trust invested in the Board by the electorate and are dedicated to governing the affairs and business of the Surrey School District in a professional manner that recognizes and affirms the rights and dignity of students. Trustees represent the broad needs of the entire School District and the community, allocating resources efficiently, inclusively, and responsibly in the best interest of all students.

Trustees advocate for public education and promote the values, goals, and initiatives of the School District to other levels of government and relevant bodies. The Board is committed to providing high quality education for all public school students within a supportive, accessible, and enriching learning environment.

Trustees will uphold the commitments articulated in the Trustee Code of Conduct and address any violation at a closed meeting of the Board.

The Board shall review this policy within six months of the Inaugural Board Meeting.

1. **EXPECTATIONS**

By working collaboratively and creatively with administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders, trustees model and contribute to a positive and receptive learning and working culture both within the Board and the School District. In exercising their duties of governance, trustees understand the importance of mutual respect, transparency, and impartiality. Committed to ethical practice and principles, trustees shall act with integrity and be accountable for their actions and decisions. To fulfill the responsibilities of public office effectively, trustees are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the Board; in the event of an unavoidable absence, trustees shall inform the Board Chair.

Trustees will ensure that the decisions they are making are in regards to the governance of the School District and will respect that day-to-day operations of the School District are the responsibility of the Superintendent or designate.

2. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

As per *Policy #2902 – Board Member Conflict of Interest*, Trustees are expected to adhere to all applicable legislation regarding conflicts of interest and to avoid any perceived or potential and actual conflicts of interest.

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3. DECISION MAKING

Trustees shall consider information received from all sources, base their decisions upon all available facts, and vote impartially in every situation. To facilitate effective decision making, trustees must be knowledgeable about the School Act; statutory requirements; existing Board policy and practices, initiatives, and long-range plans; and current educational issues, both local and provincial. It is expected trustees shall be diligent in familiarizing themselves with supporting documents, in advance of meetings, in order to make informed and credible decisions.

4. TRUSTEE MOTIONS

Trustees are able to put forth a motion for Board consideration. The Trustees will inform the Secretary-Treasurer's Department of the motion, for consideration by the Board Chairperson at the agenda planning meeting.

Upon approval by the Board Chairperson, the Secretary-Treasurer's Department will circulate a copy of the proposed motion, no later than 24 hours before the next Board Meeting.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Trustees shall preserve the confidentiality of information discussed at closed school board or committee meetings and shall not release privileged information in any format to the public until the Board has done so in an official capacity.

6. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Trustees shall work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation and be respectful of differences of opinion. Trustees shall refrain from making discrediting comments about others, engaging in unwarranted criticism, or taking private action that could compromise the integrity or authority of the Board. Trustees shall observe proper decorum and encourage full, open, and courteous discussions in all matters with other trustees. Information that may be of potential concern should not be concealed or withheld.

7. PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Trustees welcome constructive engagement and participation from the broad school community in establishing and interpreting policy on school operations, goals, and directions. Trustees will endeavor to share and incorporate the opinions and views of others in the deliberations and decisions of the Board. Timely reporting out of information will be provided to those who are impacted by Board decisions.

8. LEGAL AUTHORITY OF INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEES

Trustees recognize that, as a Corporate Board, the authority to make decisions must only be made within an official meeting of the Board. Individual trustees or committees of trustees may not exercise the rights, duties, and powers of the Board. The Chair is the official spokesperson for the Board; other Trustees shall not speak on behalf of the Board unless authorized to act in such a capacity.

In addition to being elected representatives who hold the public trust, trustees are participants in a democratic society. Trustees are free to engage in, support, or comment on community issues, but must not use their formal district titles in their communications.

9. SUPPORT FOR BOARD DECISIONS

Trustees shall present their views through the process of Board debate. Regardless of holding a minority position in debate or casting an opposition vote, trustees shall accept and endorse the majority decisions of the Board and be supportive of any proposed action or implementation that will ensure decisions have the intended outcome. Trustees also recognize and uphold the integrity and merits of their predecessors' work and achievements.

10. TRUSTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Trustees will endeavor to take advantage of educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions made available by local or provincial affiliations. Through participating in professional development opportunities, trustees can enhance their knowledge of trustee roles and responsibilities and become acquainted with current educational topics and trends.

Additionally, the District will provide Trustees with in-service training (see *Policy #2400 – School Board Meetings & Trustee In-Service Session*) on an on-going

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basis and will review procedures of governance, with an external consultant at the beginning of each term of office, or as needed.

11. SCOPE OF DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

Trustees shall respect the authority vested in the role of the Superintendent of Schools and his/her senior staff and shall give the responsibility to manage and operationalize policies and directions, which have been established and evaluated by the Board, to its executive officers.

Approved: 2016-06-03
