

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53

POLICY

No. A-10

REVIEWED WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF A BOARD ELECTION AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER

Adopted:

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

1. Purpose / Rationale

The Board of Education is elected by the community and entrusted with governing the public school system in the best interests of students.

This policy defines the role, responsibilities, and expectations of Trustees to ensure effective, ethical, and lawful governance.

2. Policy Statement

The role of the Trustee is to contribute, individually and collectively, to the Board of Education as it carries out its legislated mandate under the *School Act*. Trustees govern in the public interest, with a primary focus on student achievement, equity, and well-being, and are accountable to the electorate for the collective decisions of the Board.

3. Governance and Corporate Authority

- a. The Board of Education is a corporation under the *School Act*.
- b. Trustees have no individual authority to act on behalf of the Board except as authorized by Board policy or Board resolution.
- c. Decisions of the Board made at properly constituted meetings are decisions of the corporation and are binding on all Trustees.
- d. Trustees act collectively; individual Trustees have only the authority of any other citizen of the district when acting independently.

4. Collective Responsibilities of the Board

In their governance role, Trustees collectively shall:

- a. Set and steward the district's vision, values, and strategic direction.
- b. Develop, adopt, and monitor Board policy.
- c. Approve the annual budget and ensure responsible stewardship of public resources.

- d. Provide governance direction and hold the Superintendent accountable through policy and evaluation.
- e. Advocate for public education and student success.
- f. Ensure compliance with provincial legislation and regulations.

5. Balance of Governance and Representation

- a. Trustees serve both as governors of the district and as representatives of the community.
- b. Trustees shall consider the views of their constituents while making decisions in the best interests of the district.
- c. A Trustee's fiduciary duty is owed to the Board of Education, not to individual electors, organizations, or interest groups.

6. Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

Each Trustee shall:

- a. Regard the well-being and success of every student as their primary obligation.
- b. Act honestly, prudently, and in good faith in the best interests of the district.
- c. Prepare for, attend, and participate constructively in Board and committee meetings.
- d. Become familiar with Board policy, district operations, and relevant legislation.
- e. Support and uphold Board decisions once made.
- f. Maintain confidentiality of in camera discussions.
- g. Declare and manage conflicts of interest in accordance with the *School Act*.
- h. Refer operational matters and complaints to the Superintendent or established district processes.
- i. Refrain from involvement in school level management or direction of staff.

7. Relationship with the Superintendent

- a. The Superintendent is the Board's sole employee.
- b. Trustees shall provide direction to the Superintendent only through Board policy and Board resolutions.
- c. Individual Trustees shall not direct staff and shall arrange contact with district staff through the Superintendent or designate.

8. Ethical Conduct and Public Trust

- a. Trustees shall conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the dignity of public office and maintains public confidence in the Board and public education.

- b. Trustees shall comply with the Board's Trustee Code of Conduct and all applicable legislation.
- c. Trustees shall demonstrate respect, civility, and professionalism in all interactions, including public, media, and electronic communications.

9. Indemnification

Trustees are entitled to indemnification by the Board for actions taken in good faith while carrying out official duties, in accordance with Board bylaw and applicable legislation.

10. Orientation and Professional Development

The Board shall ensure that Trustees receive orientation following an election and have access to ongoing professional development to support effective governance and understanding of their role.