

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53

POLICY

No. A-9

Adopted:

ROLE OF BOARD CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles, responsibilities, and authority of the Board Chair and Vice-chair in support of effective governance, compliance with the *School Act*, and the Board of Education's commitment to ethical, transparent, and accountable decision-making.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 The Board Chair and Vice-chair are equal trustees, elected by the Board to provide leadership in governance rather than management.

2.2 Authority resides solely with the Board acting as a corporate body through motions passed at duly called meetings. Individual trustees, including the Chair and Vice-chair, have no independent authority.

2.3 The Chair and Vice-chair shall act in a manner consistent with Board Policy A-7 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Board, and shall:

- Safeguard the public trust
- Support respectful and inclusive Board processes
- Maintain a clear distinction between Board governance and District administration

3. Election and Term

3.1 At the inaugural meeting following a general local election, and annually thereafter, the Board shall elect from among its members a Board Chair and Vice-chair, in accordance with section 67 of the *School Act* and Board bylaws.

3.2 The Chair and Vice-chair shall hold office at the pleasure of the Board and may be replaced at any time by a majority vote.

4. Role of the Board Chair

The Board delegates to the Chair responsibility for leadership of the Board's governance processes, including:

4.1 Governance Leadership

- Safeguard the integrity of the Board's decision making and governance practices.
- Ensure the Board maintains focus on its strategic priorities, policies, and annual work plan.
- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion, accountability, and continuous improvement.

4.2 Meeting Leadership

- Preside over all Board meetings and ensure proceedings comply with:
 - the *School Act*
 - Board policies and bylaws
 - Robert's Rules of Order (or other adopted parliamentary authority)
- Ensure meetings are fair, efficient, orderly, and allow full participation by trustees.
- Rule on matters of order and procedure, subject to appeal to the Board.

4.3 Agenda Preparation

- Collaborate with the Vice-chair, Superintendent, and Secretary Treasurer in preparing Board meeting agendas aligned with governance responsibilities.
- Ensure trustees receive the information necessary to make informed decisions.

4.4 Board–Superintendent Relationship

- Serve as the primary liaison between the Board and the Superintendent on governance matters.
- Communicate Board decisions, expectations, and concerns as authorized by the Board.
- Bring matters requiring Board consideration or direction forward for decision.

4.5 Representation and Communication

- Act as the official spokesperson for the Board when authorized by Board policy or resolution.
- Represent the Board at official functions or designate an alternate trustee, as appropriate.

4.6 Additional Responsibilities

- Serve as an ex-officio member of Board committees unless otherwise determined by the Board.
- Act as a signing officer for the District when authorized.
- Perform other duties as assigned by Board resolution.

5. Role of the Vice-Chair

5.1 The Vice-chair shall support the Chair in fulfilling leadership responsibilities and promoting effective governance.

5.2 In the absence or incapacity of the Chair, the Vice-chair shall assume all duties and authority of the Chair.

5.3 The Vice-Chair shall:

- Participate in agenda planning and meeting preparation.
- Assist the Chair in ensuring Board operations align with Board policies and governance expectations.
- Carry out responsibilities delegated by the Chair or assigned by the Board.
- Act as an alternate signing officer when authorized.

6. Limitations of Authority

6.1 Neither the Chair nor the Vice-chair has authority to:

- Direct or supervise District staff
- Commit the Board or District outside of Board meetings
- Speak on behalf of the Board except as authorized

6.2 The Chair and Vice-Chair retain the same rights as all trustees, including the right to make motions, participate in debate, and vote.

7. Succession and Continuity

7.1 The Vice-chair role supports leadership continuity and effective governance succession.

7.2 When the Chair vacates the chair to participate in debate, the Vice-chair shall preside, or another trustee shall be designated by the Board.

8. Legislative Authority

This policy is enacted pursuant to:

- *School Act* (RSBC 1996), Section 67