

Policy 7 – Board Governance and Operations

The Board operates and governs itself in a manner that models respect, opportunity and innovation, and strengthens relationships within the education community. Within this framework, decisions will be made that serve to ensure quality learning opportunities and maximize learning outcomes for students of all ages.

The Board believes that its ability to discharge its obligations in an efficient and effective manner is dependent upon the development and implementation of a sound organizational design. In order to discharge its responsibilities to the electorate of the District, the Board shall hold meetings as often as is necessary. A quorum, which is a simple majority of the number of trustees holding office, must be present for every duly constituted meeting. The Board has adopted policies so that the business of the Board can be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner. All powers of the Board must be exercised by either by-law or resolution of the Board.

The Board believes that its fundamental obligation is to preserve and enhance the confidence and public trust in the public education system. Consistent with its objective to encourage the general public to contribute to the education process, Board meetings will be open to the public. The Board will meet as often as necessary to transact business, but must meet not less than once every three months.

The Board believes there are times when public interest is best served by private discussion of specific issues in “in-camera” sessions. The Board has an obligation to protect individual privacy and the Board’s own position in negotiating either collective agreements or contracts and therefore expects to go in-camera for issues such as those dealing with individual students, employees, land, labour, litigation or negotiation.

The Board believes public interest can be enhanced by having members of the public make presentations at Board meetings.

The Board believes that public information meetings dealing with specific educational topics can enhance communications and the effectiveness of the Board.

1. Meetings

1.1 Inaugural

- 1.1.1 The inaugural meeting of the Board shall be held on the first Tuesday in December of an election year (every four years), except when December 1st falls on a Monday, whereby a special meeting will be held on the second Tuesday of December with the sole purpose being;

1.1.1.1 To make a prescribed oath of office, by oath or solemn affirmation, and

1.1.1.2 To elect the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board.

1.1.2 The Secretary-Treasurer will give notice of the inaugural meeting.

1.1.3 Each trustee will take the oath of office immediately following the call to order of the inaugural meeting after a general election. Special provisions will be made for a trustee taking office following a by-election.

1.1.4 The Secretary-Treasurer shall act as Chair of the meeting until the election of Board Chair is completed.

1.2 Organizational

1.2.1 The organizational meeting of the Board shall be held on the first Tuesday in December of every year (except the year of the inaugural meeting). When December 1st falls on a Monday, the meeting will be held on the second Tuesday of December. The sole purpose of the meeting being;

1.2.1.1 To make a prescribed oath of office, by oath or solemn affirmation, and

1.2.1.2 To elect the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board.

1.2.2 The Secretary-Treasurer will give notice of the organizational meeting.

1.2.3 The Secretary-Treasurer shall act as Chair of the meeting until the election of Chair and Vice-Chair is completed.

1.3 Regular

1.3.1 The purpose of the regular Board meeting is for the Board to conduct its business. All regular meetings will be open to the public.

1.3.2 Regular Board meetings are held according to a schedule approved by the Board each June. In a year of a general election, the schedule is set until December of the coming year only.

1.3.3 Notwithstanding the schedule noted above, the Board may, by motion, alter the schedule in such manner as it deems appropriate.

1.3.4 Meetings shall not exceed 11:00 p.m. unless a motion to extend the meeting is passed by 2/3 majority of trustees present.

1.4 Closed (in-camera)

- 1.4.1 As per Section 69 of the [School Act](#), if, in the opinion of the Board, the public interest so requires, persons other than trustees may be excluded from a meeting. Notwithstanding this, the Secretary-Treasurer or designate must be present at the time that a decision of the Board is rendered and must record any decision.
- 1.4.2 Unless otherwise determined by the Board, legal, student, personnel and property issues, which require confidentiality, will be closed sessions.
- 1.4.3 The Agenda Setting Committee, consisting of the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer shall determine items on the agenda for each closed meeting, subject to Board approval.
- 1.4.4 The Board shall only discuss the matter which gave rise to the closed meeting. Board members and other persons attending the session are honor bound not to disclose the substance of deliberations at such sessions.
- 1.4.5 In accordance with Section 72(3) of the [School Act](#), the Board shall prepare a record containing a general statement as to the nature of the matters discussed and the general nature of the decisions reached at a meeting from which persons other than trustees or officers of the Board, or both, were excluded.

1.5 Special (Extraordinary)

- 1.5.1 Occasionally, unanticipated or emergent issues require immediate Board attention and/or action.
- 1.5.2 Unless deemed to be 'closed', all special meetings are open to the public.
- 1.5.3 A special meeting of the Board may be called by the Chair or, on written request by a majority of the trustees or the Superintendent in consultation with the Chair, provided all trustees have been notified forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.
- 1.5.4 No business other than that for which the meeting was called shall be discussed without unanimous consent of all of the trustees.
- 1.5.5 The Board may, by unanimous consent of all trustees, waive notice and hold a meeting at any time. Such consent shall be duly noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- 1.5.6 Whenever practicable, the notice of the meeting should contain an Agenda, as well as supporting documentation for items to be discussed.

1.6 Public Information

- 1.6.1 Public Information Meetings are open to the public and are called to seek input from, or provide information to the public. These meetings are scheduled on an as-needed basis. The agenda for such meetings is topic specific.

1.7 Working Sessions

- 1.7.1 The Board feels it is desirable to meet periodically in a working session environment. In this setting, trustees discuss matters relating to operation of the District. Such meetings are held as necessary throughout the year. At these working sessions, the Board shall take no actions that replace debate or actions at a public meeting.

1.8 Attendance at Meetings

- 1.8.1 If a trustee(s) is unable to attend a meeting, the Board, or Board committee may permit attendance through teleconferencing or videoconferencing, providing that all trustees in attendance are able to communicate with one another.

2. Agenda

- 2.1 Items may be placed on the agenda in one of the following ways:

- 2.1.1 By notifying the Board Chair at least 7 days prior to the Board meeting.
- 2.1.2 By notice of motion at the previous meeting of the Board.
- 2.1.3 As a request from a committee of the Board.
- 2.1.4 As outlined in items 2.5 and 2.7.

- 2.2 If an in-camera meeting is required, it will be scheduled prior to the regular Board meeting.

- 2.3 The Agenda Setting Committee consisting of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer shall establish items on the agenda for each Board meeting. The agenda shall generally follow the order outlined below:

- 2.3.1 Approval of Agenda
- 2.3.2 Singing of 'O Canada'
- 2.3.3 The Board will recognize that the school district resides on the shared traditional ancestral territory of the Sumas and Matsqui First Nations.
- 2.3.4 Consent Items (minutes of previous meeting(s), correspondence)
- 2.3.5 Delegations/Presentations
- 2.3.6 Report on Achievement/Results
- 2.3.7 Question Period
- 2.3.8 Committee Reports

- 2.3.9 Reports by Representatives on External Organizations
 - 2.3.10 New Business
 - 2.3.11 Trustee Announcements
 - 2.3.12 Question Period
 - 2.3.13 Adjournment
 - 2.4 Two (2) public question periods will be held to a maximum of ten (10) minutes each. Questions that relate to agenda items at the meeting may be asked. Question periods are dedicated only for members of the public. School district staff will address the board only through the Superintendent's Report on Achievement/Results, as per Section 2.3.6 (above).
 - 2.5 Issues that require Board action may arise after the agenda has been prepared. The Board Chair, at the beginning of the meeting, shall ask for additions to and/or deletions from the agenda prior to agenda approval. Changes to the agenda may be made by a majority of those present.
 - 2.6 The Board will follow the order of business set by the agenda unless the order is altered or new items are added by agreement of the Board.
 - 2.7 During the course of the Board meeting, the majority of trustees present may request that the Board Chair place items before the Board for discussion. The Board may take action on such items.
 - 2.8 The agenda will be supported by copies of letters, reports, contracts and other materials as are pertinent to the business which will come before the Board and will be of value to the Board in the performance of its duties.
 - 2.9 The agenda information package, containing the agenda and supporting information, will be distributed to each trustee at least four days in advance of regular Board meetings.
 - 2.10 The list of agenda items shall be posted on the District [website](#).
3. Minutes
- 3.1 The Board shall maintain and preserve by means of minutes a record of its proceedings and resolutions. The minutes shall record:
 - 3.1.1 Date, time and place of meeting;
 - 3.1.2 Type of meeting (regular, special or committee);
 - 3.1.3 Name of presiding officer;
 - 3.1.4 Names of those trustees and administration in attendance;
 - 3.1.5 Approval of preceding minutes;
 - 3.1.6 A brief summary of the circumstances which gave rise to the matter being debated by the Board;

- 3.1.7 All resolutions, including the Board’s disposition of the same, placed before the Board, should be entered in full;
 - 3.1.8 Names of persons making the motion;
 - 3.1.9 Points of order and appeals;
 - 3.1.10 Appointments;
 - 3.1.11 Summarized reports of committees; and
 - 3.1.12 Trustee declaration pursuant to section 56, 57, or 58 of the [School Act](#).
- 3.2 The minutes shall:
- 3.2.1 Be prepared as directed by the Secretary-Treasurer;
 - 3.2.2 Be reviewed by the Superintendent prior to submission to the Board;
 - 3.2.3 Be considered an unofficial record of proceedings until such time as adopted by a resolution of the Board; and
 - 3.2.4 Upon adoption by the Board, be deemed to be the official and sole record of the Board’s business.
- 3.3. The Secretary-Treasurer shall ensure, upon acceptance by the Board, that appropriate signatures are affixed to the concluding page of the minutes.
- 3.4 The Secretary-Treasurer shall establish and maintain a file of all Board minutes.
- 3.5 All committees of the Board, unless otherwise directed, shall prepare and submit minutes or a report to the Board.
- 3.6 Upon adoption by the Board, the minutes shall be open to public scrutiny at the Board office at all reasonable times.
- 3.7 Copies of the minutes adopted by the Board shall be added to the [School District Website](#), distributed to all trustees and other destinations as directed by the Board as soon as is practicable.
- 3.8 Individuals may make copies and extracts on payment of a fee set by the Board.
4. Correspondence to the Board
- 4.1 The Board believes that it is the delegated responsibility of administrative staff to act for the Board within the bounds of District/Board Policy. However, trustees are to be kept informed of non-routine items of business and are to be given the opportunity to seek further information on such matters.
 - 4.1.1 A list of all non-routine correspondence addressed to the Board or received by the Superintendent or designate acting in their official corporate capacities will be forwarded to all trustees in a timely fashion.

- 4.1.2 A list of official correspondence received by the Board will be available at each regular meeting.
- 4.1.3 All district related correspondence or material addressed to a trustee in name or as chair of a committee will be forwarded to the Superintendent.

5. Motions

5.1 Notice of Motion

- 5.1.1 The notice of motion serves the purpose of officially putting an item on the agenda of the next or future regular meetings and gives notice to all trustees of the item to be discussed. A notice of motion is not debatable and may not be voted on.

5.2 General

- 5.2.1 All matters relating to the formal agenda for the Board meeting shall be by a motion which has been moved and seconded before formal debate. Before a formal motion is placed before the Board by a trustee, an opportunity will be provided for questions and clarification.
- 5.2.2 The custom of addressing comments to the Board Chair is to be followed by all persons in attendance.
- 5.2.3 Motions shall be phrased in a clear and concise manner so as to express an opinion or to achieve a result. A preamble does not form part of a resolution when passed. The Chair or recording secretary may request that the mover put a motion in writing to ensure accurate recording of the motion in the minutes.
- 5.2.4 The presiding officer may divide a motion containing more than one subject if the Chair believes this would produce a fairer or clearer result and the same shall be voted on in the form in which it is divided.
- 5.2.5 No motion other than to postpone consideration of a question, or a procedural motion, shall be repeated during the calendar year except by the reconsideration or rescinding process.
- 5.2.6 A motion to reconsider cannot be applied to action that cannot be reversed; for example, entering into a contract.
- 5.2.7 A motion to reconsider can only be made at the same meeting where the original motion was voted upon and by a member who voted on the prevailing side. No question can be reconsidered twice.
- 5.2.8 A motion to rescind will be considered only if notice has been given at the previous meeting or in the call for the present meeting. A motion to rescind may be moved by any trustee, regardless of his/her original vote.
- 5.2.9 A motion to table is not debatable other than as to propriety. (There is no set time limit.)

- 5.2.10 A motion to postpone is debatable. (It can be postponed indefinitely or to a certain time.)
- 5.2.11 A motion can be withdrawn or modified by the mover without the consent of anyone before the motion is stated by the Chair. Once the motion has been stated by the Chair, it belongs to the assembly and the mover must request permission to withdraw or modify it. If there is an objection, the Chair shall ask the meeting if the request should be granted and a majority vote is needed for withdrawal.
- 5.2.12 An amendment to a motion or resolution does not require notice. Only one amendment to an amendment shall be allowed and the same shall be dealt with before the original amendment is decided. An amendment may not change the intent of the original motion.
- 5.2.13 All motions to refer resolutions to the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), or branches thereof for endorsement or adoption, shall receive prior discussion in order to clarify intent and wording of the main resolution.
- 5.2.14 All motions to amend Board policy shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer and presented to the Board at the regular meeting immediately preceding the meeting at which they are to be discussed. (Notice of Motion). The written Notice of Motion to amend Board policy shall contain the proposed action and rationale.

6. Debate

- 6.1 Debate shall be strictly relevant to the question and the presiding officer shall warn speakers who violate this rule.
- 6.2 No person shall speak until recognized by the Chair.
- 6.3 Subject to the discretion of the Chair, no person shall speak more than twice to a question unless a motion to extend debate is carried, except the mover of the motion who will have the right to make a reply when all trustees who wish to speak have spoken. No trustee shall speak for a period in excess of five minutes at one time. The Chair may caution a trustee who persists in tedious and repetitious debate and may direct him/her to discontinue if he/she persists.
- 6.4 A matter of privilege (a matter dealing with the rights or interests of the Board as a whole or of a trustee personally) may be raised at any time and shall be dealt with forthwith before resumption of business.
- 6.5 No trustee shall interrupt another trustee who has the floor except to raise a point of order or a point of privilege.
- 6.6 A motion must be made by a member who has obtained the floor, while no question is pending. The maker of the motion, if he/she desires may speak first.
- 6.7 Debate can be closed by a motion to end debate. This is not debatable, must have a seconder, and must be passed by two-thirds majority.

- 6.8 This policy shall govern points of order and procedures not provided for or specified by the School Act. Where there is an inconsistency, the School Act shall apply. Where situations arise which are not covered by the School Act or policy, reference to ‘Robert’s Rules’ shall be in order.
- 6.9 An appeal may only be requested immediately after a ruling and before resumption of business. The appeal shall be decided without debate by a majority vote of trustees present. A successful appeal does not necessarily set a precedent.
7. Voting
- 7.1 A quorum of the Board shall be four trustees.
- 7.2 All trustees present at a meeting are expected to vote; although, a trustee must abstain from voting in the event that he/she has a conflict of interest by reason of having a direct pecuniary interest in a vote (Section 58, School Act). A trustee may also abstain from voting if he/she states at the meeting her/his reasons thereon prior to a vote being taken.
- 7.3 Voting shall be conducted either by a show of hands or through any electronic means in use by the Board. Only the results will be recorded, unless a trustee requests that names be recorded. If a record of names is requested, only negative votes and abstentions shall be recorded. Upon request, where a conflict exists, the reason(s) for an abstention shall be recorded.
- 7.4 The Chair has the same right to vote and shall vote at the same time as the other members of the Board and, in the case of an equality of votes for and against a motion, (a tie), the question is resolved in the negative, and the Chair shall so declare.
- 7.5 All questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the trustees present (quorum) and voting save as otherwise provided by these rules or the School Act.
- 7.6 Where an interpretation is required, the question at hand shall be deferred until the following meeting or, if emergent, to the end of the meeting to allow staff to research the appropriate interpretation based on ‘Robert’s Rules’. The resulting interpretation may require a change to this policy and, if so, will be done by notice of motion. A notice of motion to update this policy will be made subsequent to the question at hand being dealt with.
8. Delegations to Board Meetings
- 8.1 The Board will receive representations and delegations on any subject pertinent to Board business provided the item has been placed on the agenda.
- 8.2 Requests to present shall be made in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer or designate seven (7) days prior to a regular Board meeting. In order to assist delegations with their presentations, “Guidelines for Delegations”, will be made available at the time the request to present is made. Delegations may be referred to ‘closed session’ if necessary. The Board reserves the right to limit the number of delegations appearing at a particular Board meeting.

- 8.3 The delegation shall identify a spokesperson who will present the information to the Board, and act as a contact person to whom the Board may direct a reply at a later date.
 - 8.4 The delegation will be expected to limit any presentation to ten (10) minutes. The Board will ordinarily take the presentation under advisement and may take action after due deliberation.
 - 8.5 Notwithstanding the above, and at the discretion of the Board, an individual or group may appear before the Board at a regular meeting without prior notice.
9. Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- 9.1 At its inaugural meeting following a general local election, and for each of the following three years, on the first Tuesday in December, or at another date determined by the Board, the Board shall elect one of its members to serve as Board Chair and one of its members to serve as Vice Chair.
 - 9.2 Process for Election of Chair and Vice Chair:
 - 9.2.1 The secretary-treasurer will call three times for nomination for the position of Board Chair (seconding is not necessary).
 - 9.2.2 After all nominations have been received the secretary-treasurer will ask for a motion for nominations to cease.
 - 9.2.3 Nominees will be asked in alphabetical order if they accept their nomination.
 - 9.2.4 If there is more than one nomination, all nominees will be provided an opportunity to speak to their nomination for the position.
 - 9.2.5 The secretary-treasurer will conduct a vote by ballot (unless a nominee is acclaimed to the position of Chair).
 - 9.2.6 That person receiving a clear majority shall be elected Board Chair for the ensuing year.
 - 9.2.7 If no person receives a clear majority, further ballots shall be taken until the same is achieved or if after a second ballot, a tie shall occur, the election shall be decided by the drawing of lots.
 - 9.2.8 Upon completion of the voting for the Chair, the Chair will then continue with the same process for the election of Vice Chair.
 - 9.2.9 A motion to destroy the ballots following any voting will be requested.
10. Trustee Indemnity
- 10.1 Under Section 71 of the [School Act](#), a Board may authorize the payment of remuneration (indemnity) to be paid to trustees. The [Income Tax Act](#) allows part of this indemnity to be declared as a tax-free expense allowance.
 - 10.2 Trustee indemnities will be established by the Board in election years through the following process:
 - 10.2.1 An External Ad-Hoc Trustee Indemnity Committee will be established by the Board of Education, based on the recommendation of the Secretary-Treasurer.

- 10.2.2 The Board will appoint a Chair and other members of the Committee at a Regular Board Meeting every January in the year of the General Local Election.
- 10.2.3 The Trustee Indemnity Committee will be composed of a Chair and four (4) other members, comprised of any of the following individuals;
 - 10.2.3.1 One representative from University of the Fraser Valley
 - 10.2.3.2 One member from the District Parents Advisory Committee
 - 10.2.3.3 One representative from the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
 - 10.2.3.4 One Elected Official from the City of Abbotsford
 - 10.2.3.5 One member of the Abbotsford Police Commission
 - 10.2.3.6 One member of the Abbotsford Community Foundation
 - 10.2.3.7 One representative from the general public
- 10.2.4 The Committee will provide their report to the Board of Education no later than the last Board meeting of June in the year of a General Local Election.
- 10.2.5 The indemnity will be deposited to a financial institution of the trustee's choice.
- 10.3 Many conventions, conferences and seminars are of interest and value to trustees during their term of office. Travel, board, lodging, miscellaneous living expenses and registration fees will be paid by the Board when a trustee attends a conference, seminar or convention. A trustee shall not exceed his/her allowance without approval of the Board.
- 10.4 The Board shall establish an amount within the budget to cover expenses incurred by trustees related to their attendance at meetings, seminars, conventions and related events.
- 10.5 The budget designated by the Board for Trustee expenses shall be divided into two categories as follows:
 - Trustee Personal Pro-D & Community Engagement.
 - 10.5.1 The Board will establish a four-year Personal Pro-D/Community Engagement Budget each election year. During their term, Trustees shall be entitled to one-seventh (1/7th) of this budget to allow an individual trustee at his/her discretion to participate in conferences, meetings or other events. The budget would be set as an equal amount for each trustee.

Board Related Expense Activity

- 10.5.2 Sufficient funds will be set annually to cover expenses where normally all trustees participate, such as BCSTA Annual Meetings, BCSTA Branch Meetings, Board Retreats, BCPSEA meeting, meetings with Ministry of Education, etc.
- 10.5.3 Trustees may expend funds as allocated to them within the allowance set by policy at their discretion to the maximum of their budget amount.
- 10.5.4 No trustee shall exceed his or her budgetary allotment without express approval of the Board.

11. Trustee Conflict of Interest

- 11.1 The trustee is directly responsible to the electorate of the District and to the Board.
- 11.2 Upon election to office, the trustee must accept a position of public trust and is expected to act in a manner which will enhance the trust accorded the trustee, and through the trustee, the trust accorded to the Board.
- 11.3 Elected officials must not have financial interests, liabilities or appointments which place them in a position of conflict of interest or opportunity for personal gain while representing the District.
- 11.4 The Board's ability to discharge its obligations is dependent upon the confidence the residents of the District place in the Board and in its trustee members.
 - 11.4.1 The trustee is expected to be conversant with Sections 55 to 60 of the [School Act](#).
 - 11.4.2 The trustee is responsible for declaring himself/herself to be in perceived conflict of interest.
 - 11.4.3 The trustee shall make such declaration prior to Board or committee discussion of the subject matter which may place the trustee in conflict of interest.
- 11.5 It shall be the responsibility of the trustee in conflict to absent him/herself from the meeting in accordance with the requirements of the [School Act](#) and ensure that his/her declaration and absence is properly recorded within the minutes.
- 11.6 The [Financial Disclosure Act](#) requires all trustees to disclose personal financial information as required under the Act and permits the Board of Education to designate employees to disclose the same. All trustees shall file disclosure forms under the [Financial Disclosure Act](#).

12. Board Self-Evaluation

- 12.1 The Board will establish self-evaluation process that will complement the Superintendent evaluation process.