



# Policy No. 3 103

## ROLE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education for School District No. 87 (Stikine) acknowledges that the *British Columbia School Act* specifies that a Board of Education is a corporate body, and that its rights, duties and powers reside with the board and not with individual trustees. All decisions of the board must be made by formal bylaw or resolution at a legally constituted board meeting. Board decisions may not be made at a committee meeting or by the board chairperson.

Local school boards are elected to **oversee the provision of educational services in the district.** They represent the interests of the community in improving student achievement and engaging the members of the community in supporting all students. They advocate for public education and their communities, both locally and provincially. ~~They are responsible for the delivery of quality education programs to all students who enroll in the schools and their district.~~ **The mandate and responsibilities of the Board are determined through the requirements of government legislation and in consideration of the values of the electorate.**

### GUIDING LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

- *School Act, Section 85*

### REGULATION

The ~~*School Act Section 85*~~ gives Boards of education general powers to carry out their functions under the act. These functions include:

#### **1. Accountability to Government**

- Act in accordance with all statutory requirements of federal and provincial legislation to implement educational standards and policies.
- Perform Board functions required by governing legislation and existing Board policy.

#### **2. Accountability to the Community**

- Make decisions that reflect the District's principles and belief statements, and represent the broad interests of the community.
- Establish processes and provide opportunities for community engagement.
- Report District results at least annually.
- Develop procedures for and hear appeals from parents and students **as required by statute and/or Board policy.** ~~where staff decision significantly affects student.~~

- e. Model a culture that reflects the Board's code of conduct and shared community values.
- f. Provide for two-way communication between the Board, Indigenous communities, and stakeholder groups.
- g. Meet as needed with municipal government and other governing authorities in educational/public service or business to assist in achieving educational goals.

### **3. Strategic Planning**

- a. Provide overall direction for the district by establishing the mission, vision, values, and strategic foundation statements.
- b. ~~Approve the district's long-term Strategic Plan. Preparing an annual district literacy plan, a plan for improving literacy in the school district.~~
- c. Set strategic goals and monitor key results, particularly the progress of ~~Preparing achievement contracts on improving student achievement.~~
- d. ~~Approve other plans as required by the School Act and/or Operating early learning programs, with agreement of the Minister.~~

### **4. Policy**

- a. Identify the reason and/or intended purpose before creating a new policy.
- b. Make the final decision regarding the approval of all district policy.
- c. Evaluate policy impact to determine if policy has created the desired change or results. ~~Setting local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools.~~
- d. ~~Establish policies that outline how the Board/School District will function. Enacting policies governing student conduct and discipline.~~
- e. Delegate authority to the Superintendent and define commensurate responsibilities.

### **5. Board/Superintendent Relations**

- a. Select the Superintendent.
- b. Provide the Superintendent with clear corporate (Board) direction.
- c. Delegate in writing, administrative authority and identify responsibilities subject to the provisions and restrictions in provincial legislations and regulations.
- d. Respect the delegated authority of the Superintendent to carry out executive action and support those actions which are exercised within the discretionary powers of the position.
- e. Evaluate the Superintendent and review the contract of employment at least annually.

### **6. Political Advocacy and Responsibility**

- a. Consider the priorities and focus for advocacy, key messages and advocacy mechanisms.

- b. Provide input, as required, to the British Columbia School Trustee Association and British Columbia Public Sector Employers' Association.
- c. Advance board/district positions and priorities through local/community and provincial organizations and as deemed appropriate.

#### 7. Board Development

- a. Self-evaluate the Board's performance and effectiveness at least **annually** biennially (every two years) as per guidelines and best practices provided by the BC School Trustee Association.
- b. Actively participate in Board Professional Development.

#### 8. Fiscal Accountability

- a. Approve the annual district budget which aligns with the Strategic Plan.  
~~Employing the staff necessary for school district operations, such as teachers, principals, supervisory personnel, aides, clerical and administrative personnel, custodians, building maintenance staff, bus drivers, etc...~~
- c. ~~Approving annual school plans.~~
- b. Annually appoint the auditor and approve the terms of engagement.
- c. Annually review the audit report and management letter.
- d. Annually approve the Audited Financial Statements.
- e. Provide direction regarding the mandate for employee negotiations.  
~~Establishing conditions of employment for employees, within the framework of collective bargaining for unionized staff.~~
- f. Ratify memoranda of agreement with bargaining units.
- g. Approve the acquisition, ~~owning~~ and disposition of **district land and buildings** ~~school property~~, and making decisions on school facilities, such as the closing of schools where necessary.
- h. Annually approve the five-year capital plan (major and minor).
- i. Review and monitor all accumulated surpluses and reserve funds to ensure financial health and stability.
- j. Provide for adequate budget consultation processes with the community, Indigenous communities and stakeholders.
- k. Regularly monitor fiscal management of the district.

#### 9. Additional Responsibilities

- a. Approve annual local school calendars in accordance with legislation.
- b. Approve local **Board Authority Authorized Courses** ~~and resource materials for use in the school district.~~
- c. Approve the process for and the naming of educational facilities, school district properties and portions thereof.
- d. Approve school catchment areas.
- e. Approve district partnerships and associated major contracts.
- f. Approve other matters as required.

## **DISTRICT EXPECTATIONS – TRUSTEES (see NEW Policy No. 112 – Role of a Trustee)**

The School Board represents the entire school district, not just those people who voted for its members. The school system is not the property of the Board, even in its collective capacity. Essentially the Board's function is to make decisions sensitive to the public issues and to engage in the various activities necessary to the making of those decisions. Because it handles some of the powers of the province, the Board of Trustees is a part of the machinery of the state, a governmental body with sovereignty, by law, over the local school system. Its decisions represent the final voice of the people within its jurisdiction in educational matters.

Because of the foregoing the Board of Trustees for School District No.87 (Stikine) believes that each individual trustee should act consistently with a set of appropriate expectations which focus on the characteristic of a good trustee.

### **Characteristics of a Good Trustee are:** (see Policy 104 – Code of Trustee Conduct)

- Fully comprehends that his/her role is that of a formulator of the policy – the rules and regulations – which directs the quality of education and the efficiency of the district's operations and which become the guidelines to chart courses of actions.
- Acknowledges that there are five essentials for trustee policy makers to remember:
  - 1) By law, by theory and by good practice you are required to devote a major portion of your time, your efforts and your talents to policy-making and seeing that policies work.
  - 2) The Board makes policy. The Administration executes it. The Superintendent is your Chief Executive Officer and he is employed to implement your policy.
  - 3) You operate in the field of education – a field that has engaged the minds of philosophers and statesmen.
  - 4) Only the Board as a body can make policy. The individual trustee, by himself/herself, has little power and no legal standing.
  - 5) The staff you employ (your Chief Executive Officer and his officers) will not, and should not be totally subservient to the Board. The staff is a body of trained professional whose expertise you utilize, and who must subscribe to certain legal prescriptions, professional ethics and obligations.
- Is interested in the Board and willing to devote sufficient time to meet the responsibility of the trusteeship.
- Recognizes the integrity of former boards and former trustees and realized that present policies and procedures were established for a reason. Changes should be initiated after careful consideration of all the facts.
- Is a contributor to board decisions, and does not practice hindsight reactions.
- Is knowledgeable of the policies and procedures of the Board; is one who does his "homework" prior to voting on Board business and who comprehends fully the educational, financial and legal ramifications of his actions.
- Recognizes that authority rests only with the Board in official meetings, and that the individual member has not status to bind the Board outside of such meeting.
- Has the self-assurance and courage to stand behind decisions made by the Board.
- Does not give individual interpretation of Board Policy and Procedures.
- Will refrain from public position on an issue before the decision is made. This makes

it easier to look at new information that may change one's position.

- Has the ability to think constructively as well as critically and the strength to resist pressure groups.
- Realizes that minority or special interest groups should not have a disproportionate influence on decisions.
- Refuse to discuss confidential matters in the home, business or any other public place.
- Recognizes the chain of command in the resolutions of problems pertaining to policy questions.
- Will make decisions based upon what is best for the entire district rather than personal or geographical interests.
- Should be the eyes and ears of the Board in his area. He/She can be of immeasurable help in keeping the Superintendent informed of problems or potential problems and selling of good will for the association. He/She knows how to separate fact from gossip.
- Will desire that the Superintendent and his staff research topics, make reports and give recommendations before taking action.
- Refuses to make statements or promises to friends and acquaintances regarding possible board action, but refers any and all inquiries to the Superintendent and his staff for recommendations.
- Should honour the high responsibility which his membership demands.
- Should respect his relationships with other members of the Board and maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent and his staff.

#### **Summation of Characteristics of a Good Trustee**

1. Fairness: This means that an individual member should try to appraise the various decisions to be made in terms of what is fair for member schools.
2. Responsible: This requires that a board member realize that his/her position requires him/her to represent all member schools, not just friends, neighbours or the power structure.
3. Informed: This means that a board member must continually try to know the rules, the policies and how the implementation of them can be done with a minimum of effort and confusion. Also, board members are expected to be prepared to discuss items for which information has been provided in advance.
4. Communication: A board member should develop or have personality which enables him/her to communicate with others and be articulate enough to discuss positions with a calm and businesslike attitude toward persons with vested interests or concerns.
5. Trust: This characteristic or quality requires that the board member strive towards, over a period of time through his/her actions, gain the confidence of all member schools to such a point that decisions will be made and implemented which represent the best of good judgement.

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