



# Policy No. 112

## ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

### POLICY STATEMENT

Trustees are elected in accordance with the *Local Government Act*. The *British Columbia School Act* prescribes eligibility requirements for running for the office of School Trustee. The Board of Education of School District No. 87 (Stikine) is a corporate body elected by citizens of Atlin, Lower Post, Good Hope Lake, Fort Ware, Dease Lake, Telegraph Creek, Iskut, and surrounding areas.

The role of the trustee is to actively support the school board in fulfilling its legislative mandate. Upon assuming office, each trustee takes an oath of office that legally and ethically binds them to serve the cause of public education with diligence and integrity. In executing these duties, a trustee holds a fiduciary responsibility to prioritize the collective interests and long-term vision of the school board above all else.

### **Structure and Authority**

The Board of Education operates strictly as a corporate entity. Board decisions made during properly constituted meetings are corporate actions. The *School Act* grants no individual authority to trustees. An individual trustee retains only the authority and status of a private citizen, unless the board explicitly delegates corporate authority to them to act as its agent.

### **Fiduciary and Representative Duties**

Trustees hold a primary fiduciary duty to the school board, placing the district's collective interests above personal, familial, or special interests. While trustees serve as elected community representatives, they must balance this role by participating in decisions that benefit the entire school district.

### **Public Accountability**

Trustees are collectively and individually accountable to the electorate for the board's decisions and the overall quality of educational services. They share one overarching responsibility: to work in good faith and with reasonable diligence to advance the mission of the school board.

### GUIDING LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

- *School Act, Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85*
- *Local Government Act*
- *A Guide for School Trustee Candidates, BCSTA 2018*

### REGULATION

#### **1. Trustee Rights**

Subject to board policy and bylaws, trustees have a right to:

- a. **Express Views:** Voice opinions openly and respectfully, with the expectation of mutual respect from fellow trustees and staff.
- b. **Represent Constituents:** Advocate for community interests while maintaining a strategic, district-wide perspective.
- c. **Independent Voting:** Vote on issues free from internal pressure, lobbying, or undue influence.
- d. **Compensation:** Receive remuneration and expense allowances according to board policy and the *School Act*.
- e. **Orientation:** Access a comprehensive orientation session upon election.
- f. **Information Access:** Request and receive information from the Superintendent (or designate) regarding district operations, policy, and board activities to support their role.
- g. **Effective Governance:** Attend well-organized, purposeful, and efficient meetings.

## 2. Trustee Roles and Responsibilities

Within the framework of board policy and bylaws, trustees must take the prescribed oath of office and fulfill the following core responsibilities:

- a. Board Governance & Meeting Conduct
  - i. Attend board and assigned committee meetings regularly to contribute to student-centered decisions.
  - ii. Adhere to the direction and authority of the board chairperson during meetings.
  - iii. Support and advance all majority decisions of the board and monitor progress.
- b. Professional Development & Preparation
  - i. Review all policies, agendas, and reports thoroughly prior to meetings.
  - ii. Attend orientation sessions hosted by district staff and the BC School Trustees' Association (BCSTA).
  - iii. Participate regularly in ongoing professional development to enhance leadership quality.
- c. Staff Relations and Advocacy Protocols
  - i. Route all official trustee communications with district staff strictly through the Superintendent (or designate).
  - ii. Direct operational inquiries or complaints from parents, staff, or community members back to the appropriate teacher, principal, or district staff, while informing the Superintendent.
  - iii. Offer the Superintendent counsel, local context, and perspective based on community experience.
  - iv. Notify the board and Superintendent promptly of any community matters significantly impacting the district.

- v. Refer administrative issues directly to the Superintendent, while routing governance issues to the full board for corporate discussion.
- d. Ethical Conduct & Community Values
  - i. Champion the foundational importance of public education in a democratic society.
  - ii. Foster a positive, respectful learning and working environment across the board and district.
  - iii. Maintain the highest standards of integrity and duty throughout election cycles.
  - iv. Comply fully with **Board Policy 104 - Code of Trustee Conduct**.

### 3. Trustee Orientation

To ensure governance continuity and a smooth transition following an election, the board requires a comprehensive orientation program to brief trustees on district policies, statutory duties, and strategic plans.

#### a. Orientation Program Content

The district will provide an orientation program for all trustees covering:

- i. The roles, responsibilities, and authority of individual trustees and the corporate board.
- ii. Organizational frameworks, administrative procedures, agendas, and meeting minutes.
- iii. Current district initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements, and long-range facilities or education plans.
- iv. Overview of district educational programs and operational services.
- v. The board's statutory function as an appeal body for student or parent grievances.
- vi. Statutory, regulatory, and legal requirements, focusing specifically on conflict of interest and privacy laws.
- vii. Trustee remuneration and expense reimbursement guidelines.

#### b. External Training Support

The district will provide financial support and budget allocations for trustees to attend orientation seminars hosted by the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA).

#### c. Program Administration & Oversight

The board chair and Superintendent are jointly responsible for developing and executing the district's orientation program.

The Superintendent will ensure each trustee receives or has full digital access to the *Board Policy Handbook* and *Administrative Procedures Manual* at the organizational meeting following a general election, or at the first regular meeting following a by-election.

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