

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Trustee Handbook



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Preface

Public education and the students of Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools are best served by a Board of Trustees that leads by example in all its decisions and activities. The WRPS Trustee Handbook contains clear statements and explanations of the policies, principles, protocols, and practices related to Board Governance and Operations at Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools.

The WRPS Trustee Handbook details how the Board accomplishes its main governance tasks:

- representing the interests of the community and reflecting the values of the community in its decision making,
- serving as an advocate and steward of public education,
- setting priorities and policies to provide leadership and overall direction for the Division,
- allocating resources to the Division to fulfill its responsibilities,
- monitoring the implementation of policies,
- evaluating the results achieved in the Division,
- reporting the results achieved to its public,
- serving as a communication bridge between the community and the Division, and
- hiring and evaluating the Superintendent of Schools to ensure accountability to students and the public.



About Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools (WRPS) serves 3,400 students across 17 schools located in the City of Wetaskiwin, the County of Wetaskiwin, and the Town of Millet.

Our schools vary in size, from about 17 students in one of our two Hutterite Colony schools to over 914 students in a high school in the City of Wetaskiwin. Among our students, 900 identify as Indigenous. Geographically, we have six schools in the City of Wetaskiwin, seven rural schools in the County of Wetaskiwin, two colony schools, and one school in the Town of Millet.

WRPS is dedicated to providing a high-quality education in a safe and caring environment, supported by a variety of programs and services. We have enhanced our offerings in sports, arts, counseling, special education, career guidance, and student mental health support.

Our diverse programming includes Indigenous Education, Mental Health Capacity Building, and Outreach Programs, along with fitness, health and wellness, art, drama, music, and sports options available throughout the Division. Additionally, our extracurricular activities offer students the chance to engage in music and drama productions, special interest clubs, and athletic teams, fostering a well-rounded education.

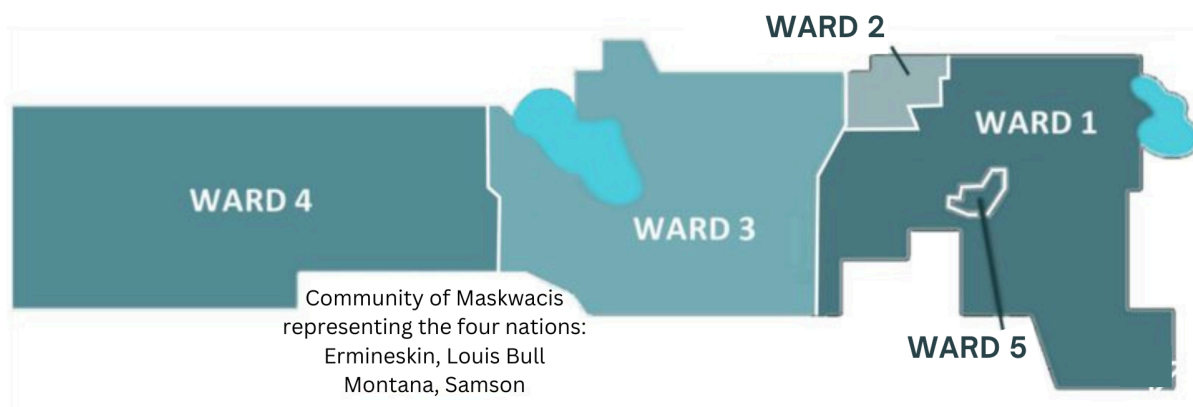
WRPS employs approximately 200 certificated teaching staff and 235 support staff. The Division is governed by an elected Board of seven trustees, along with one Maskwacis First Nations Trustee appointed by the Maskwacis Four Bands. Each school is supported by a school council or parent advisory committee, where parents and teachers collaborate to enhance student learning and well-being.

In May 2024, the WRPS Board of Trustees approved an operating budget of approximately \$57 million for the period of September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025, which includes an operating deficit of approximately \$1.6 million. Over the past few years, WRPS has strategically utilized reserves to support small rural schools and ensure students across the division have access to a wide range of programming options.



Maps of Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

Electoral Subdivision Map

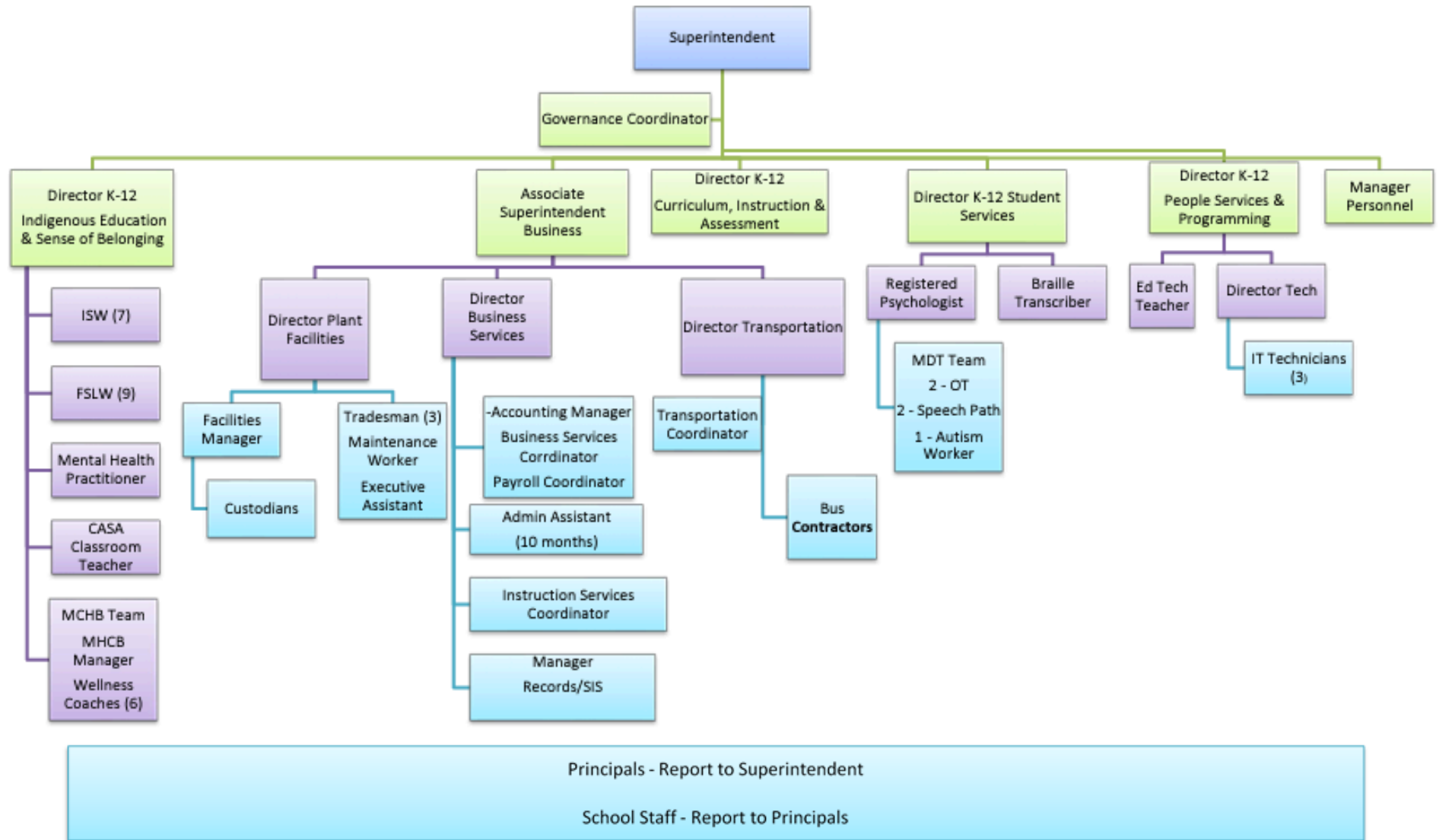


Map of Schools

- Google Maps for each site on available on each School's Website:
[Our Schools](#) | [Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools](#)



WRPS Organizational Chart



Alberta School Boards Association

The Alberta legislature, through the Education Act and regulations passed thereunder, delegated some authority for the governance of education to locally elected school boards. School boards are statutory corporations and, as such, have certain obligations to perform and certain powers to carry out their tasks.

The philosophy of school board governance is that government is most effective when it is close to the people being governed. Historically, community residents have elected trustees to boards to act for the legislature in their local schools.

The board practices leadership through governance in three main areas: **fiduciary leadership**; **strategic leadership** and **generative leadership**. In its **fiduciary leadership** role the board focuses on its legal responsibilities as defined in the Education Act, regulations and other legislation pertinent to children and youth.

The board provides oversight and stewardship to ensure:

- Each student has the opportunity to achieve his/her potential;
- Children are safe at school;
- The jurisdiction's financial and capital resources are well managed;
- That business is conducted in a legal and ethical manner.

The school board's **strategic leadership** role sees school boards looking into the future – conducting environmental scans of internal and external issues and trends. In this role, the school board reviews, revises or drafts the school jurisdiction's mission, values, vision and goals. This role involves planning and making decisions about resources, programs and services that reflect long term priorities.

The school board's **generative leadership** role is grounded in the notion that “it takes a whole village to raise a child”. It recognizes that governance should not exist in isolation but that it should engage the community. In its generative leadership role, the school board reaches out to involve the community in a dialogue about the needs of the community, its youth and the future. Moving beyond consultation, generative leadership suggests that school boards share direction-setting and sometimes decision-making with others. This role increases education's profile as a fundamental community resource and it gives all citizens an opportunity to shape the direction that education takes locally.

Role of School Boards

The school board, as a representative of the people, is a decision-maker and direction-setter. The board integrates information from many sources; processes that information; evaluates it and makes a decision compatible with the system's beliefs, values and goals.

As it makes these decisions, the school board considers the interests of all the students in the jurisdiction – not just the interests of students from a particular school or area.

- The school board is responsible for setting the overall direction for the school system. This is usually done through an annual strategic planning process. The board revisits its vision, mission, values and beliefs and identifies strategic priorities and goals for the system.
- The school board sets the annual budget which determines how resources are allocated to schools and programs. The school board also provides direction through its policy processes. These include planning, developing, implementing and evaluating policy.
- The school board also holds the system – and the board itself – accountable for achieving its goals. The board creates this accountability by assigning roles and responsibilities for the desired results and creating a system to monitor and evaluate those results.
- The school board reports system and school performance to the public and to the provincial government.
- The school board is an advocate for public education and for the local school system. As an advocate, the school board consults with its constituents; it provides advice with respect to education to MLAs and government as an individual board and collectively through the Alberta School Boards Association. School boards also advocate for students. The board assesses proposed policies based on what is best for the development of the whole individual. Serving on a school board means partnering with parents to ensure children are provided with the best possible educational opportunities to become productive citizens who contribute to their communities.
- The school board selects a Superintendent of Schools, delegates administrative duties to the superintendent and evaluates the superintendent's performance. The school board clearly outlines its expectations of the superintendent. In this context, job descriptions must be based on outcomes or accomplishments rather than activities.
- While legislation gives the school board the power to engage in a wide range of activities, it is most common for the school board to delegate operational tasks to the superintendent. School boards tend to focus on governing the system by setting performance targets and holding the system accountable for the desired results. It is critical that the school board creates the appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the appropriate conduct of the school system and the limitations of delegated responsibilities or powers. Ultimately the board is accountable.

What is a Trustee Personally Liable For?

Relationship between the school board and the superintendent

The relationship between the school board and the superintendent is the most important relationship in the school system. The school board and superintendent have different but complementary roles in many areas. Each party's success is greatly influenced by the other's success. Both parties must nurture this relationship. The school board must clearly establish the roles and responsibilities of the school board, the school board chair, and the Superintendent.

No trustee can act alone – the school board is a corporate entity

The school board is a corporation. If the school board chooses, it may delegate a trustee to perform specific duties as an individual; but only as an agent of the board and only as prescribed by the board, by board motion. In other words, the school board is ultimately responsible for the individual's action. With this exception, a trustee acting on his or her own has only the authority and privileges of an ordinary citizen.

What is a trustee personally liable for?

All authority delegated by the province is to the corporate school board; not to individual trustees. With the four following exceptions any action taken against the school board is against the corporate board – not individual trustees.

- **Improper Use of Funds**

If a school board uses money acquired for capital expenditures for unauthorized purposes, the trustees who were on the board when the board approved the improper application of the capital money, whether or not they are still trustees, are jointly and severally liable for the payment to the board of the amount of money applied to the unauthorized use (Education Act).

- **Non-Performance of Statutory Duties**

Trustees who fail or refuse to perform statutory duties imposed by various statutes may be held personally responsible (e.g., the Employment Standards Code could hold trustees jointly and severally liable for unpaid wages).

- **Personal Gain**

If a court declares a trustee disqualified from remaining on the board due to his/her personal gain from contracts with the board, the trustee may be ordered to pay the board any profits.

- **Breaches of Common Law**

Trustees may be held personally liable for breaches of common law such as acting in bad faith, in a discriminatory manner or in abuse of their powers. It must be noted that actions against such breaches are likely to be successful only where the evidence presented is clearly indisputable.

General Duties of Individual Trustees

1. Politician

Trustees, as policy makers and legislators, are politicians, not by the common definition associated with partisan politics, but as members of a governmental unit charged with the responsibility of conducting the affairs of the school jurisdiction. They are responsible to their electorate through the democratic process. They must be highly visible and skilled at reading the mood and understanding the feelings of the community. They must also be skilled at diplomacy and public relations as they deal with general community and interest groups.

The political process is the process by which a community makes decisions about its goals, priorities, processes, and allocation of resources and the means by which it will resolve its conflicts. A politician is an important part of this process; elected and accountable to the community, which is the very essence of democratic government. Webster's Dictionary defines politician as "one versed in the art and science of government, especially one actively engaged in conducting the business of a government". The business of the Board is to provide access to educational services for students.

2. Goal Setter

The trustee, through the Board, provides leadership to the system by setting goals, statements of purpose, and directions, which serve to identify the results the Board wishes the system to achieve. If a Board is not continually studying its community and society needs, the school system will continue to educate its students in a manner which prepares them better for the past than the future. It is the trustee's responsibility to ensure that education stays in step with today's world and is ready for the world of tomorrow.

3. Planner

To guide the system toward the achievement of its goals, the Board must plan the allocation of its resources. The trustee, as a planner will be faced with setting priorities in light of community wishes, changing needs, resources available and sound educational practice. This planning will necessitate the delegation of duties to Division administration and staff. The quality of planning will determine the success of goal achievement.

4. Evaluator

The trustee, as evaluator, must ensure that policies are within the parameters of the Board's authority, consistent with goals, compatible with other policies, implemented in a fair and just manner, and effective in achieving intended outcomes. In addition, the trustee is constantly evaluating the information received before decisions are made. Trustees must constantly appraise the system to determine its present development relative to expressed goals. The appraisal function is an important on-going activity that allows the trustee to assess the total system and make adjustments when necessary.

5. Financial Planner

The Board operates within specific financial parameters. The trustee recognizes that the wishes of all

cannot be realized and that astute financial planning is an essential part of trusteeship. The role of the trustee is to assess the needs of the system and to decide what can be achieved with the resources available. The annual budget is a statement to administration, the schools and the public that the Board is accountable for the dollars spent. In the eyes of the public, the adoption of the budget is one of the most important decisions a Board makes; it is an opportunity for the trustee to demonstrate to the electorate willingness and ability to shoulder the responsibility that comes with being a member of the Board.

6. Policy Maker

A responsibility of the trustee, through the Board, is to develop policy which will guide the administration and other employees toward achieving Division goals. Policy-making requires recognition of the needs for specific policies and often the anticipation of those needs. Policies create the framework within which the staff performs their duties. The trustee, as policy maker, recognizes that the task of implementing policy is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent of Schools. Policy development is also a process which allows for systematic review by trustees of the Division's objectives and plans.

7. Legislator

Many acts of a Board have the status of law in a jurisdiction. When a Board sets the school year or develops a policy on student transportation or wellness, these actions are laws which govern the conduct of students and staff. Other Board actions directly impact members of the public. The trustee, as legislator, must carefully consider the effects the Board's laws will have on all the members of the community it serves.

8. Communicator

To effectively meet the responsibility of trusteeship, the trustee must be a communicator; one who will interact effectively with the many publics who have an interest and role in education. The electorate must be made aware that their concerns and wishes will be heard and in turn must be informed as to the actions taken to deal with them. Effective communication is essential between board members as in reality the corporate decision determines the actions of the Division. Expectations need to be clearly communicated to staff. Different points of view must be presented, considered and evaluated. In short, communication is an integral part of trusteeship, a necessary skill and a critical obligation.

Because much of a trustee's work is done electronically, trustees are expected to keep up with current technological trends in the school division. All WRPS employees have an LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) account with a username and password. The credentials for your username and password are required to connect to a WRPS network and to log on to a WRPS laptop. Additionally, all WRPS employees are assigned a WRPS Google email account that you are expected to use in your role. Your Google email account will have a username (your email address) and a password that differs from your LDAP account. You are responsible for knowing both sets of usernames and passwords.

Further, all Board meeting agenda packages are managed in Google Enterprise. Each trustee should have proficient knowledge of Google Drives, Meets, and Docs. Initial training will be provided, as necessary, and after that it is the trustee's responsibility to navigate within Google.

9. Leader

Each trustee, representing all the citizens of the community and responsible to the electorate through the democratic process, recognizes:

- That fellow citizens have entrusted them, through the electoral process, with the educational development of the children and youth of the community.
- That trustees are the children's advocates and their first and greatest concern is the best interest of each and every one of these children without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be.
- That trustees are educational leaders who realize that the future welfare of the community, of the Province, and of Canada depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education they provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner.
- That legally the authority of the Board is derived from the Province which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the Division and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of this community for the exercise of local autonomy.
- That trustees must never neglect their personal obligation to the community and their legal obligation to the Province, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization but that, beyond these, trustees have a moral and civic obligation to the Nation which can remain strong and free only so long as public schools in Canada are kept free and strong.



Governance

Board Policies are developed to highlight and support the very important governance function of the Board. In addition to clearly defining the role of the Board, the role of the Superintendent and the delegation of authority from the Board to the Superintendent, they include the following policies:

1. Foundational Statements which provide guidance and direction of all activities within the Division.
2. Directions for how the Board itself is to function and how individual trustees are to conduct themselves; how Board committees and representatives are to function;
3. Statements as to how appeals and hearing will be conducted;
4. Non-delegable matters such as school closures and policy-making; and
5. Specific matters which the Board has chosen not to delegate to the Superintendent.

Board Policies are intended to be supplemented by Administrative Procedures; the primary written documents by which the Superintendent directs staff.

BOARD POLICIES

[Policy 1: Foundation Statements](#)

[Policy 2: Role of the Board](#)

[Policy 3: Role of the Trustee](#)

[Policy 4: Trustee Code of Conduct](#)

[Policy 5: Role of the Board Chair](#)

[Policy 6: Role of the Vice-Chair](#)

[Policy 7: Board Operations](#)

[Policy 8: Committees of the Board](#)

[Policy 9: Board Representatives](#)

[Policy 10: Policy Development](#)

[Policy 11: Board Delegation of Authority](#)

[Policy 12: Role and Evaluation of the Superintendent](#)

[Policy 13: Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters](#)

[Policy 14: Hearings on Teacher Transfers](#)

[Policy 15: Closure of Schools and Program Reduction](#)

[Policy 16: Student Transportation](#)

[Policy 17: Sustainability and the Environment](#)

[Policy 18: Community Use of Facilities](#)

[Policy 20: Disposition of Surplus Real Property](#)

[Policy 21: Financial Investments](#)

[Policy 22: Petitions and Public Notices](#)

[Policy 23: Electoral Subdivisions and Ward Boundaries](#)

[Policy 24: Financial Support](#)

To view all the policies, go to [WRPS Policies](#).

Board Self Evaluation

The Board conducts an annual Board Self Evaluation in June of each year. The Board Self Evaluation is designed to provide for both accountability and growth. The growth portion serves the following purposes:

- provides the basis for an action plan to build Board capacity
- leads to tangible improvements in the functioning of the Board
- influences plans for future Board actions
- allows the Board to express the kind of Board it wants to be

The Board Self Evaluation is meant to be a “living document”, to provide a positive path forward for the Board. The Board Self Evaluation is intended to be reflective of the entire evaluation period.

Superintendent Evaluation

The Board will conduct an evaluation for Superintendent of Schools annually. This process is normally facilitated with the assistance of the Alberta School Board Association. This evaluation normally happens in June of each calendar year and is conducted in accordance with the “*Superintendent/CEO Evaluation Process, Criteria & Timelines*” document approved by the Board and agreed to by the Superintendent upon his appointment as Superintendent.

Supplemental Materials

- **Provincial Legislation and Guides**

- [Education Act](#) - The *Education Act* sets out the goals, roles and responsibilities of Alberta’s Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 (ECS-12) education system.
- [Local Authorities Elections Act](#) - The *Local Authorities Election Act* governs municipal elections by establishing procedures around campaigning, voting and counting of votes.
- [FOIP Act](#) – Freedom of Information and Protection - This *Act* protects an individual's privacy by setting out rules for collection, use or disclosure of personal information by public bodies. It also provides a method of requesting access to information which is not available by other means.
 - [FOIP Guide](#) - This Guide provides an overview of Alberta’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the regulation made under the Act (also referred to as the FOIP Act and FOIP Regulation).
- [Notaries and Commissioners Act](#) - This act sets out the procedure for the appointment of a notary public and a commissioner for oaths along with the roles and responsibilities.
 - [Information and Instructions for Commissioners for Oaths](#) - This guide was prepared to assist Commissioners for Oaths.
- [Guide to Education - ECS to Grade 12](#) – The Guide to Education provides key information and requirements for the operation and delivery of ECS-12 education programs and services in Alberta.

- **Federal Legislation and Guidelines**

- [What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation](#) - The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has developed a definition of *reconciliation* and a

guiding set of principles for truth and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the twenty-first century, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canada must be based on these principles of reconciliation. By establishing a new and respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, we will restore what must be restored, repair what must be repaired, and return what must be returned.

- **Education Funding in Alberta**

- [Funding Manual for School Authorities](#) - The Funding Manual provides details on the funding available for the school year, including applicable formulas, funding rates, criteria and reporting requirements.
- [Education Funding in Alberta - Kindergarten to Grade 12](#) - This booklet is an overview of funding provided by the Government of Alberta for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education.

- **WRPS Reports**

- [WRPS 3-Year Education Plan](#)
- [Three-Year Capital Plan](#)
- [WRPS Foundational Statements](#)

- **ASBA Guide:**

- [School Boards](#)
- [ASBA Guide for School Board Trustees](#)

- **Robert's Rules/Parliamentary Procedure**

- [Parliamentary Procedure for Meetings](#) - Remember, these processes are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.
- [Robert's Rules Cheat Sheet](#)

- **Maps and Contact Information for Alberta School Boards/School Authorities**

- [Alberta School Authorities](#)
- [Map - Public, Francophone and Charter School Jurisdictions](#)
- [Map - Separate School Jurisdictions](#)
- [Map - Francophone Authorities and Schools](#)

- **What's On The Horizon?**

- [Ministry Initiatives](#)

