ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate in order to achieve its mission and goals. The oath of office taken by each trustee when s/he assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of education.

The Board of Trustees is a corporation. The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. Individual trustees exercise an effective decision making role in the context of corporate action. A trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the Board may carry out duties individually but only as an agent of the Board. In such cases, the actions of the trustee are those of the Board which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the Division.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

1. Become familiar with Division policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports in order to participate in Board business.

2. Provide for the engagement of parents, students and various communities.

3. Respectfully bring forward and advocate for local issues and concerns.

4. Refer matters not covered by Board policy, but requiring a corporate decision, to the Board for discussion.

5. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent.

6. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint or an inquiry from a parent, staff member or community member about operations, will refer the parent, staff member or community member back to the teacher, Principal or department and will inform the Superintendent of this action.

7. Keep the Superintendent and the Board informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to his/her attention that might affect the Division. Personnel matters are to be brought to the attention of the Superintendent only.

8. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, providing the benefit of the trustee’s judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.

9. Attend meetings of the Board; prepared to participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for education within the Division.

10. Support the decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the corporate opinion of the Board when it does not.
11. When delegated individual responsibility by the Board, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.

12. Participate, subject to Board approval, in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the Division can be enhanced.

13. Stay current with respect to educational issues and trends.

14. Share the materials and ideas gained with fellow trustees at the Board meeting immediately following a trustee development activity.

15. Contribute to a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the Division.

16. Attend Division or school events when possible.

17. Act as a liaison to assigned School Councils/Parent Advisory Councils.

18. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.

19. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair, or where applicable, to the Vice Chair.

Orientation

As a result of elections, the Board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate smooth transition from one Board to the next following an election, trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing Board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives and long-range plans.

The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship. All trustees are expected to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

1. The Division will offer an orientation program for all trustees that will provide information on:
   1.1 Role of the trustee and the Board;
   1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the Division;
   1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
   1.4 Existing Division initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
   1.5 Division programs and services;
   1.6 Board’s function as an appeal body; and
   1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest.
2. The Division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association and Public School Boards Association of Alberta sponsored orientation seminars.

3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the Division’s orientation program for trustees.

4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures and issues.

Legal Reference:  Section 60, 61, 68, 72, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 246 School Act
Section 6, Commissioner of Oaths Act