



ONTARIO EDUCATION SERVICES CORPORATION

Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees

Modules

15

What makes a great Board Chair?

TIP SHEET - EVALUATING YOUR BOARD MEETINGS

With the chair's responsibilities in mind, use the following headings to help you evaluate the meetings of your school board.

- **Planning:** Has the board developed adequate planning procedures for determining agendas and preparing back-up reports and briefings?
- **Pre-meeting dissemination:** Has the board developed procedures for getting meeting materials and notices in the hands of board members, the press and public leaders two or three days in advance of meeting dates.
- **Pre-meeting conference:** Do the chair and director confer to review upcoming business, to clarify agenda items and to anticipate possible problem areas?
- **Tone:** Are the board's meetings conducted with a professional and positive tone? Are trustees encouraged to ask questions? Are all voices heard? Is there a sense of "team"? Are people treated respectfully?
- **Policies:** Has the board developed an adequate set of written policies or by-laws on Board Meeting Procedures? Is there a Code of Conduct for the board?
- **Student achievement and well-being:** Is the board's focus on student achievement and well-being maintained?
- **Vision, mission and multi-year plan:** Does the agenda for the meeting align with the board's vision, mission and multi-year plan for the district? Do board members consider the board's vision, mission and multi-year plan in their discussions, deliberations and decision-making? Does the chair bring the focus back to the vision, mission and multi-year plan if necessary?
- **Homework and preparation:** Do all board members review the agenda, read the reports, and come to meetings prepared to contribute to discussions without wasting meeting time by going over matters that were included in the pre-meeting information package?

- **Public involvement:** Has the board established an orderly method for the public to be heard at board meetings? Does the chair make visitors feel welcome?
- **Proper role:** Has the board developed a clear policy as to the kinds of matters which need not be brought to the board’s attention and which may be handled by the administrative team under the director of education? Do board members clearly understand the responsibilities of individual trustees, of the board chair and of the board of trustees?
- **Recommendations:** Is there an opportunity for the director to specify his/her “Recommended Action” on each major agenda item?
- **Pace:** Do meetings begin on time? During meetings, does the board chair keep an eye on the clock so that adequate time can be provided for important matters? Are meetings brought to an end at a reasonable time?
- **Clarification:** Does the chair clarify each agenda item? Does he/ she outline – for the benefit of the board, press and public – specific goals to be achieved? Is he/she adept at summarizing arguments before bringing matters to a vote?
- **Control:** Does the chair keep discussions to the subject at hand? Does he/she bring board members to order when they interrupt a speaker – or who talks while the speaker is talking? Is the chair firm when required? Does the chair follow Roberts Rules of Order or a similar format to conduct meetings?
- **Conflict Management:** Does the board follow a Code of Conduct? Do members use conflict management strategies if disputes arise?