



ONTARIO EDUCATION SERVICES CORPORATION

Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees

Modules

15

What makes a great Board Chair?

EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETINGS: SETTING THE AGENDA

Working Together: The Chair and the Director of Education

The board chair and the director of education need to communicate frequently to discuss many matters including:

- Items to be placed on the board agenda, the order or sequence of agenda items and what board action is needed for each item
- What role the director will play at board meetings and at what point s/he will be recognized
- The kinds of reports the director will give to the board
- How the director intends to use staff members or outside consultants during the meeting
- How to handle emergency situations that might arise
- How to deal with special interest groups
- Dealings with the news media

Setting the Agenda for the Board Meetings

In consultation and collaboration with the director of education, the board chair is responsible for setting the agenda for meetings of the board and ensuring that all trustees receive the information they need before the meeting, including the agenda and any required information about the agenda items, such as relevant reports from the staff.

The agenda outlines the order of business for the meeting. Unless there has been a change in the regular date or other changes that need to be announced, the agenda often serves as notification of the meeting as well. Agendas may be posted for the community to see on the board's website.

Different boards follow different agenda styles but most contain similar items. It is helpful to adopt a consistent agenda format. The following sample agenda is adapted from the *Saskatchewan School Boards Association Handbook*. It contains typical agenda items for a board of trustees.

A Sample Agenda

1. **Opening:** Chairperson brings meeting to order and opens with a welcome. He or she can ask a member to prepare a “thought for the day” to set the tone of the meeting, or an interactive tool from the Good Governance for School Boards: Trustee Professional Development Program – Resources could help focus the group on a particular topic.
2. **Roll Call:** Secretary keeps a record of:
 - a. Those present
 - b. Those absent without notification
 - c. Those who sent regrets
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting:** “Are there any errors or omissions?” Errors are corrected, omissions are inserted. Minutes are then declared “Approved as printed” or “Approved as corrected”.
4. **Financial Statement**
5. **Business Arising from the Minutes** This item will deal with ongoing business and gives continuity to the work of the board/committee. Under this heading is listed those matters to be discussed.
6. **Reports from the Director or Staff**
7. **Reports of Members with Special Task Assignments**
8. **Visitor or Speaker** - if any
9. **Business:** List here those matters which are to be discussed for the first time.
10. **Correspondence** - if any
11. **Date of Next Meeting**
12. **Announcement or Memos**
13. **Adjournment:** Chairperson asks “Is there any further business to come before the meeting at this time?” Chairperson declares the meeting adjourned.