



3 Right from the Start: Roles and Responsibilities

Job Description – Board of Education

The following template offers a “job description” of the elected school board. It incorporates requirements of the *Education Act*. It is vital for the board of trustees to be clear about the alignment between its job as a governing policy-making body and the job of director of education as the chief executive officer who implements the directions of the board. In essence, the elected board should be clear about what its policies are, why they exist, be able to explain them to the public and hold the director of education accountable for implementing them.

This sample job description can be a basis for the dialogue and decision-making that clarifies the respective responsibilities of the elected board and the director of education⁵:

Accountability for Student Achievement and Well-being

- Make decisions that reflect the District School Board’s focus on student achievement and its philosophy and belief statement that all students can learn.
- Promote a culture of equity to ensure that an appropriate educational program is available for all students in the district.
- Approve measures that promote student well-being.

Accountability to the Provincial Government

- Act in accordance with the *Education Act*, Regulations, and other statutory requirements to ensure the implementation of provincial and education standards and policy.
- Provide advice to the Ministry of Education and the provincial trustee association regarding regional and local implications of new policy recommendations.



Accountability to the Community

- Make decisions that reflect the District School Board's philosophy, belief statements and strategic plan which represents the interests of the entire district.
- Establish processes that provide the community with opportunities for input appropriate to their role.
- Consult and engage with parents, students and supporters of the board on the board's multi-year plan.
- Provide two way communications between the District School Board and School Councils/Parent Involvement Committee (Boards are required to establish a Parent Involvement Committee in accordance with Regulations.)
- Provide reports outlining District results in accordance with Provincial policy
- Develop procedures to receive and hear appeals in accordance with appropriate statutes and District policies.
- Model a culture that reflects the District's Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct.

System Leadership and Planning

- Provide overall direction for the District School Board by establishing the purpose (Mission), vision and belief statements.
- Develop and approve a multi-year plan aimed at achieving the board's goals.
- Annually set priorities with outcomes (Strategic Plan)
- Annually approve the Board Plan in public session for District distribution.
- Annually use the Board Plan to drive the budget process.
- Annually review the multi-year plan with the board's director of education.
- Annually evaluate the effectiveness of the District School Board in relation to the Board Plan.
- Monitor progress toward the improvement of student achievement.
- Communicate regularly with supporters and employees of the board about progress made in implementation.



Policy Development, Implementation and Evaluation

- Develop policies that outline how the District will successfully function, and that promote the board's goals and encourage pupils to pursue their educational goals.
- Ensure that all new policies have in place a purpose statement prior to development.
- Approve policy statements that meet the criteria identified by the District.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies developed by the board in achieving the board's goals and the efficiency of the implementation of those policies.
- Hold the Director of Education accountable for the implementation and review of Board policies.

Director/District School Board Relations

- Select the Director of Education.
- Provide the Director with a clear job description and corporate direction.
- Delegate through policy, administrative authority and responsibility subject to the provisions and restrictions of the *Education Act* and Regulations.
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the Director in meeting his/her duties under the *Act* including related policies, guidelines and regulations as well as duties under the multi-year plan and any other duties assigned by the board.
- Promote the professional growth of the Director in continuing to provide quality district leadership.
- Ensure ongoing capacity building and succession planning for key positions.
- At least once a year at the Director's request, provide the Director with an opportunity to meet alone with the Board in private session.
- Promote a positive working relationship with the Director of Education.

Fiscal Responsibility

- Develop a budget review process to help determine annual resource allocations. (Use the Board Plan and other provincial and local directions.)
- Annually approve the budget to ensure that the financial resources are allocated to achieve the desired results.
- Approve as per legislation all Capital Plans and other planning documents that will drive budget decisions.
- Have in place an Audit Committee, in accordance with provincial regulations.
- Set parameters for collective bargaining and ratify Memoranda of Agreements with all bargaining units and non-union groups.



Board Development

- Formally evaluate the Board’s effectiveness and performance on a regular basis.
- Develop an annual action plan for both collective and individual trustee development by increasing knowledge of: trustee role; processes, issues; and Board vision and mission.
- Use the expertise of the Director of Education, and other provincial organizations to help develop and support the Board of Trustees’ professional development plan.
- Seek opportunities to network with other school boards.

Political Advocacy and Communication

- Develop and maintain positive and effective relationships with the Minister of Education, members of provincial parliament and counterparts in municipal government.
- Annually develop a plan for District advocacy that aligns with the elected board’s multi-year strategic plan. Consider in the plan the focus, key messages and advocacy mechanisms.
- Annually develop a plan that aligns with the multi-year strategic plan, to ensure that the District is communicating with the community and beyond.

Recognition

- Develop mechanisms to ensure that the district school board recognizes students and student achievement.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure that the district school board recognizes staff and staff achievement.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure that the district school board recognizes community members and volunteers.