



# 3 Right from the Start: Roles and Responsibilities

## Reading

### Board Leadership Development and Succession

The Chair of a school board has a very important role. How can your board ensure that it will continue to have the leadership that it requires? Here are some ideas:

- Create a Board Development Committee with responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring a succession plan.
- The committee should determine what qualities it requires in the board Chair, considering:
  - The profile of the current board's composition
  - The gaps in skills, knowledge, and representation that will exist upon the completion of current Chair's term,
  - Special skills or qualities that will be required to achieve the Board's strategic plan and goals.
- Developing leaders should be encouraged to take on a variety of roles with increasing responsibility.
- The board should provide thorough orientation, ongoing development activities, and recognition for all its members.

Continuous learning is essential to fulfilling any responsibility you take on in our complex, rapidly changing environment, including serving on a school board.

It provides you with the skills and knowledge you need to survive and keep pace with this environment. Ongoing development also keeps you challenged and motivated.

It stimulates your creativity and builds your confidence and leadership abilities. There are



many ways your board of trustees can provide you and its other members with development opportunities, including:

- Accessing Centre for Governance Excellence materials, including the *Good Governance for School Boards: Trustee Professional Development Program*
- Work with a facilitator from the Centre for Governance Excellence
- Provincial and national school board conferences, symposiums and annual meetings
- Board handbooks
- Board retreats
- Workshops and in-service training
- A form mentoring program, where more experienced board members support rookie members
- Guest speakers, including staff, volunteers, stakeholders or outside experts, presenting on areas of interest to the board
- Committee work that offers variety and increased responsibility and challenge
- Articles, books, videos, internet resources
- Board member recognition, such as verbal acknowledgement, celebrations, awards, small gifts, thank you letters.
- Opportunities to share ideas and information with other school board members.

As an elected school board member, you are expected to be a leader. The board, in leading the school district, is expected to:

- Provide a vision for the organization
- Develop the plan and the resources necessary to achieve the vision
- Create an environment that inspires others to work together towards attaining the vision
- Fulfill its responsibilities in an ethical, accountable, effective and efficient manner.



As an individual board member, you can develop and exercise your leadership abilities in a variety of ways.

Chair a committee or a meeting  
Seek out a mentor or be a mentor  
Give a presentation  
Take on a new responsibility  
Think big, think positively  
Consider the unthinkable  
Do more than what was expected  
Take a risk  
Act ethically  
Learn something new about your school district  
Read books about leadership and leaders you admire  
Attend leadership workshops  
Organize an event for your board  
Give someone honest, constructive feedback  
Offer someone encouragement and support

Solve a problem  
Listen  
Speak your mind  
Stand up for your ideas even if they are unpopular  
State your expectations  
Admit when you make a mistake  
Confront a problem  
Attend an organization function  
Help someone out of a jam  
Ask questions  
Make the hard decisions  
Delegate  
Use your contacts  
Make a donation  
Trust and respect others  
Follow through on your commitments

**Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees**  
**Module 3 Right from the Start: Roles and Responsibilities**



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