

## POLICY 112: Governing Principles

The Board of Education is responsible for governing the school district based on the educational aspirations of local communities and in accordance with the policy direction established by government. The respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Child Care and Boards of Education are detailed in the School Act.

The Board will set, create and maintain a Strategic Plan, annually report on student outcomes and put systems in place to continuously improve the educational outcomes for all students and improve equity for Indigenous students, children and youth in care, and students with disabilities or diverse abilities.

1. The power and authority of the Board only exists when it acts as a whole. As individuals, Trustees exercise no power or authority in the organization and therefore cannot act or speak for the Board unless specifically delegated to do so by the Board.
2. The only decisions of the Board are those made by the Board in a legally convened session through its accepted decision-making processes.
3. The Board's role is to oversee the strategic direction of the organization and maintain effective relationships with Rightsholders and partners.
4. In carrying out its work, it is essential that the Board prescribes clear, measurable outcomes to be achieved in relation to the Board's Strategic Priorities. The Board will adopt policies that aid in the achievement of outcomes.
5. The work to be done by the Board is determined by its mandate and its purpose (as stated in legislation), which is to govern, and consequently, is different to the work to be done by the district management, which is management and operations.
6. Trustees commit to partnering with each other and with the Superintendent of Schools/CEO to engage in actions and decisions that contribute to building and maintaining a healthy and effectively functioning Board and organization.
7. The Superintendent of Schools/CEO is the Board's only employee;
  - 7.1 who is directed by and who reports to the Board;
  - 7.2 with whom the Board communicates and interacts regarding the management, administration and operation of the organization; and
  - 7.3 who the Board holds accountable for organizational performance.

Related Legislation: Sections 22, 65, 74, 85 [BC School Act](#)

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8. At the Board's request or on the initiative of the Superintendent of Schools/CEO, relevant school district staff may be invited to attend a Board or Committee meeting to provide information relevant to their area of expertise or job responsibility, so as to assist the Board or a Committee in its discussion of a matter under its consideration.
9. The Board will ensure that an annual assessment and evaluation of Board performance is conducted (as per Policy 113: Board Evaluation and Monitoring).
10. The Board governs through policy.
11. The Board will govern in accordance with its Strategic Plan which outlines the Board's monitoring cycle.
12. All Board authority delegated to staff is delegated through the Superintendent of Schools/CEO.
13. The Board delegates and assigns to the Chair the following powers and duties:
  - 13.1 Prior to each Board meeting, meet with the Vice-Chair, the Superintendent of Schools/CEO and Secretary-Treasurer to determine the items to be included in the agenda.
  - 13.2 To chair all public and closed Board meetings and ensure that such meetings are conducted in accordance with the School Act, the bylaws, policies and procedures as established by the Board and that meetings are chaired according to Robert's Rules of Order.
  - 13.3 To perform the following duties during Board meetings:
    - 13.3.1 Maintain the order and proper conduct and decorum of the meeting so that motions may be formally debated.
    - 13.3.2 To ensure that issues being presented for the Board's consideration are clearly articulated and explained.
    - 13.3.3 Display firmness, courtesy, tact, impartiality, and willingness to give everyone an opportunity to speak on the subject under consideration in order that a Board decision can be reached.
    - 13.3.4 To direct the discussion by Trustees to the topic being considered by the Board.
    - 13.3.5 Decide questions of order and procedure, subject to an appeal to the rest of the Board. They will speak to points of order in preference to other members.

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13.3.6 Determine disposition of each motion by a formal show of hands except where a ballot is required/used.

13.4 To bring to the Board all matters requiring a corporate decision of the Board.

13.5 To act as chief spokesperson for the Board by stating positions consistent with Board decisions and policies (except for those instances where the Board has delegated this role to another individual or group).

13.6 To act as a signing officer for the Board of Education.

13.7 To represent the Board, or arrange alternative representation, at Board events, meetings with other levels of government or other organizations or at hearings.

13.8 The Chair shall share with the Board all information from meetings with other levels of government or external organizations at which the Chair attended as the Board's representative.

13.9 To ensure that the Board engages in regular assessments of its effectiveness as a Board.

13.10 Make Trustee appointments to:

13.10.1 Be Representative to organizations; and

13.10.2 Board committees.

13.11 Address inappropriate behaviour on the part of a Trustee as per Policy 130: Trustee Code of Conduct.

14. The Board delegates and assigns to the Vice-Chair the following powers and duties:

14.1 The Vice-Chair will act on behalf of the Board Chair, in the latter's absence or upon request and will have all the duties and responsibilities of the Board Chair in such instances.

14.2 The Vice-Chair will assist the Board Chair in ensuring that the Board operates in accordance with its own policies and procedures and in providing leadership and guidance to the Board.

14.3 The Vice-Chair will act as the Board of Education District Parent Advisory Representative.

14.4 The Vice-Chair will support committee chairs in their duties and act as

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committee chair in their absence.

- 14.5 Prior to each Board meeting, the Vice-Chair will meet with the Chair, the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer to review the agenda.
- 14.6 The Vice-Chair will act as the Board's signing authority in the absence of the Chair or when two signatures are required from the Board of Education.
15. Board directions or requests for information from staff must be related to the Board's mandate or execution of the Strategic Plan and occur through the Superintendent of Schools/CEO as per Policy 140: Trustee Communication.
16. The Board is responsible for setting and approving its own agenda.
17. The performance of the Superintendent of Schools/CEO is measured in relation to the direction as articulated in the Board's Strategic Plan, policies, and employment contracts.
18. The Board establishes for each of its committees a clear mandate, timelines, parameters, any power or authority delegated to it, reporting procedures and expectations regarding results.
19. It is the Board's responsibility to identify and request from the Superintendent of Schools/CEO the information it requires to enable it to create policies or make informed decisions.
20. The Board and individual Trustees will value and work through productive disagreement, diverse, opposing or contrary points of view, and conflict as long as it is not personal, disrespectful or injurious to others.
21. Trustees adhere to the SD8 Board Norms:
  - a. Trustees understand, trust, and support the role of the Board, the role, and responsibilities of the Chair of the Board, of Trustees, of Committees, and of the Superintendent.
  - b. Trustees arrive at meetings early and Trustees are fully prepared, present, and ready to participate.
  - c. Trustees commit to a safe environment for Trustees and for Staff, and create a culture that allows for open, honest communication.
  - d. Trustees ensure positive decorum through respectful inquiry, positive reinforcing language, ensuring psychologically safe spaces for Trustees and staff.

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- e. Trustees debate and discuss issues not people. Trustees are hard on problems not on people.
- f. Trustees ensure confidentiality.
- g. Trustees come to discussions and deliberations with an open mind to make thoughtful and informed decisions at the Board table not beforehand.
- h. Trustees welcome and value the voices of our Rights Holders and partners. Trustees work with them to ensure there is clear understanding around the Board's duties under the School Act and core mandate to support the success of all students.