



KENORA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy 6: Role of the Trustee

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the Kenora Catholic District School Board as it carries out its mandate to achieve its mission and goals related to student success, the Christian formation of youth and the development of a Catholic learning environment. The oath of office taken by each trustee when he or she assumes office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of education.

A trustee's role is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire board district while representing the interests of his or her constituents.

In addition the Catholic trustee must also fulfill an additional mandate. As a representative of the Catholic community each trustee must ensure that the mission of Catholic education, as part of the broader mission of the Church, is fulfilled. Because of this unique and distinctive mission, Catholic school trustees honor a set of additional expectations that have been set for them by their Church and by the Catholic community.

The *Education Act* gives no individual authority to trustees. As members of the corporate Board, trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the board and for the delivery and quality of educational services. A trustee must serve the community as an elected representative, but the trustee's primary task is to act as a member of a corporate Board.

The decisions of the board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. A trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the Board by means of written policy or resolution may carry out duties individually, but only as an agent of the board. In such cases, the actions of the trustee are those of the Board, which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the district.

Trustees bring a range of skills, experience, knowledge, values, beliefs and opinions to their role. Their background does not necessarily include teaching, administration, or any other aspect of education. Their diversity ensures that board processes are truly democratic and contributes to good decision-making. This diversity also helps trustees provide a balance between the interests of a broader community and the interests of those involved in the delivery of education.

Trustees are responsible for staying informed about developments in education. Trustees have a responsibility to learn about the school system and the many issues that face publicly funded education.

Trustees serve large constituencies, and fulfilling the representational role is challenging. A democratic system entitles everyone to a voice but does not ensure that everyone will always be content with decisions that are made. Effective communication is critically important. Regular two-way communication will enhance a trustee's ability to represent constituents and help to build understanding and consensus in the community.

The Corporate Role of Individual Trustees

The trustee shall:

- 1.1 Become familiar with the Kenora Catholic District School Board policies, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate effectively in board business.
- 1.2 Carry out his or her responsibilities in a manner that assists the board in fulfilling its duties under the Education Act, and under related regulations and guidelines.
- 1.3 Maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being.
- 1.4 Attend and participate in meetings of the Board, including meetings of the Board's committees of which he or she is a member.
- 1.5 Consult with parents, students and supporters of the board and bring any concerns to the attention of the board.
- 1.6 Refer queries or issues and problems not covered by board policy to the Board for corporate discussion, decision or delegation.
- 1.7 Entrust the day to day management of the board to its staff through the board's Director of Education.
- 1.8 Refer queries, issues or problems raised by a parent or community member to the principal and, where appropriate, inform the director of education or designate immediately. Board members support the belief that the most efficient way to run an organization is to deal with issues or problems as close as possible to the place where they occurred.
- 1.9 Provide information about a community's history, traditions and experiences when such information will be helpful for the context for decision-making by the director of education or the board.

- 1.10 Participate in and contribute to the decisions of the board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of students in the Kenora Catholic District School Board.
- 1.11 Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture within the board.
- 1.12 Bring to the attention of the Board any issues that may affect the Kenora Catholic District School Board, and interpret the needs of the community to the board.
- 1.13 Support decisions of the Board and work diligently to ensure that the decisions or policies are implemented and monitored.
- 1.14 Uphold the implementation of any Board resolution after it is passed by the board.
- 1.15 Exercise authority within defined limits when delegated such responsibility.
- 1.16 Participate in board and trustee development so that the quality of leadership and service in the Kenora Catholic District School Board will be enhanced.
- 1.17 Comply with the board's code of conduct.

2. The Catholic Role of Individual Trustees

The Catholic Trustee, as an advocate, guardian and steward of Catholic education will exercise the distinctive nature of his/her Catholic trusteeship in the following ways:

- 2.1 witnessing to the faith;
- 2.2 understanding the purpose, history and distinctive contribution of Catholic Education in Ontario;
- 2.3 promoting, protecting and advocating for Catholic education;
- 2.4 articulating the Kenora Catholic District School Board's Catholic mission and vision;
- 2.5 providing governance and policies inspired by the values and traditions of the Catholic faith and the principles of democratic and accountable governance;

- 2.6 appointing, holding accountable and supporting a Director of Education who is an authentic and effective Catholic leader;
- 2.7 ensuring that administrative structures, operational procedures and employment practices reflect the board mission and vision;
- 2.8 providing Christian stewardship of human and financial resources;
- 2.9 establishing authentic religious education programming and faith formation activities for students;
- 2.10 establishing a climate supportive of faith community;
- 2.11 supporting the implementation and realization of the Kenora Catholic District School Board's mission and vision;
- 2.12 building significant partnerships within and beyond the Catholic community in support of Catholic education.

Legal References:

Education Act S. 209 Trustee Declaration
The Road Ahead: A Report on the Role of School Boards and Trustees. The Education Improvement Commission. 1997.
Bill 177 - Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, 2009

Other References:

Catholic Trustees: Advocates, Guardians and Stewards of Catholic Education. Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees: Core Module 3

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