

The Role and Responsibility of the Trustee

The Education Act stipulates Board membership will occur through an electoral process and the Municipal Elections Act and its Regulations outline the process and define, by formula, the maximum number of Trustees to be elected in each particular jurisdiction. Municipal elections take place every four years, during which, school Trustees are elected by the electoral group the board represents. Trustees are local politicians and advocates who represent and address concerns of their broader constituency of students, parents, taxpayers and various interest groups. At the same time Trustees support the work and efforts of all employees and foster a reciprocal relationship with administration in problem solving and meeting the challenges associated with providing world class educational programs and services.

Mission, Vision, Values and Strategy

The most fundamental leadership role of the elected board is to set the conditions for a highly performing organization. This role is proactive and strategic – it is focused on the present and its link to an improved future. Effective boards develop an inspiring mission and vision for their district and establish a small number of core priorities for the system, usually 3 or 4 that focus on the improvement of student achievement and well-being. These priorities form the foundation of a multi-year strategic plan that provides a roadmap for the system for 3 to 5 years.

Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (2014) builds on the education system's three current priorities: increasing student achievement, closing gaps in student achievement and increasing public confidence in publicly funded education. It encompasses these goals and reaches deeper and broader, raising expectations both for the system and for the potential of our children and students. Our renewed goals for education are:

- ◇ *Achieving Excellence*
- ◇ *Ensuring Equity*
- ◇ *Promoting Well-Being*
- ◇ *Enhancing Public Confidence*

A critical job of the elected board is to develop a concise and clearly stated focus for the district that is limited to the core priorities and is aligned with the provincial mandate.

- ⇒ *Policy Development and Review*
- ⇒ *Stewardship of Resources*
- ⇒ *Intelligent Accountability*
- ⇒ *Collective Capacity*

Doing these key jobs well is not an easy matter. It takes a willingness of board members to explore the very best governing practices available, to examine their own ways of doing business and, as necessary, to adopt practices that will make them more effective governors.

References:

Trustee Professional Development Program:

<http://modules.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/an-introduction-to-the-trustee-professional-development-program.html>

Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (2014):

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/excellent.html>