
Trustee Code of Ethics & Conduct**-PREAMBLE-**

School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) resides in the two Traditional Territories of the Nle?kepmux and Syilx people and serves the seven distinct communities of Shackan, Nooaitch, Lower Nicola, Coldwater, Upper Nicola, Princeton and Merritt. The Board of Education is comprised of elected members from these diverse communities and are committed to serving its members and meeting the vision of “Success for ALL Learners – Today and Tomorrow” with a commitment to both Human Rights and Truth and Reconciliation.

Trustee Code of Ethics & Conduct

The Board of Education is comprised of elected members of the community and is fundamental to the effectiveness of the public education system within the community. In British Columbia, boards of education are responsible for public schools (K-12), early learning, and adult literacy. They share these responsibilities as co-governors with the provincial Ministry of Education. Broadly speaking, boards provide district-level policy leadership that enhances student achievement, hires and manages the senior district staff, and ensures the prudent use and control of the district’s resources. Locally elected boards of education provide the local autonomy and work to increase equity and community confidence in public education in British Columbia. Boards carry out their work by keeping in touch with their local communities, meeting on a regular basis, reviewing recommendations and reports from staff, and making decisions in the best interest of the students, staff and the district. The day-to-day administration of the education program and conduct of school operation is the responsibility of the superintendent of schools and district staff.

-POLICY-

In accordance with the School Act, the Nicola Similkameen Board of Education recognizes its primary mandate to determine policy for the effective and efficient operation of its schools. The Board is committed to providing high quality education for all public school students within a supportive, accessible, and enriching learning environment.

As democratically-elected members of the Board, Trustees fully acknowledge the critical trust invested in the Board by the electorate and are dedicated to governing the affairs and business of the Nicola Similkameen District in a fair, respectful, and professional manner that recognizes and affirms the rights and dignity of all students. Trustees represent the broad, diverse needs of the entire School District and the community, allocating, through the appropriate channels, resources efficiently, inclusively, and responsibly in the best interest of all students.

Trustees advocate for public education and promote the unique culture, vision, values, goals, and initiatives of the School District to other levels of government, stakeholders, and partners. The Board, representing all members of the community, wishes to operate under the highest of ethical standards. To this end, trustees will aspire to these statements:

COMMITMENT STATEMENTS

1. Decorum

By working collaboratively and creatively with administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders, Trustees model and contribute to a positive and receptive learning and working culture both within the Board and the School District. In exercising their duties of governance, Trustees understand the importance of mutual respect, transparency, and impartiality. Committed to ethical practice and principles, Trustees shall act with integrity and be accountable for their actions and decisions. To fulfill the responsibilities of public office effectively, Trustees are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the Board; in the event of an unavoidable absence, Trustees shall inform the Board Chair.

2. Decision Making

Trustees shall consider information received from all sources, base their decisions upon all available facts, and vote impartially in every situation. To facilitate effective decision making, Trustees must be knowledgeable about the School Act; statutory requirements; existing Board policy and practices, initiatives, and long-range plans; and current educational issues, both local and provincial. It is expected Trustees shall be diligent in familiarizing themselves with supporting documents, in advance of meetings, in order to make informed and credible decisions.

3. Confidentiality

Trustees shall preserve the confidentiality of information discussed at closed school board or committee meetings and shall not release privileged information in any format to the public until the Board has done so in an official capacity.

4. Working Relationships

Trustees shall work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation and be respectful of differences of opinion. Trustees shall refrain from making discrediting comments about others, engaging in unwarranted criticism, or taking private action that could compromise the integrity or authority of the Board. Trustees shall observe proper decorum and encourage full, open, and courteous discussions in all matters with other Trustees. Information that may be of potential concern should not be concealed or withheld.

5. Public Relations

Trustees welcome constructive engagement and participation from the broad school community in establishing and interpreting policy on school operations, goals, and directions. Trustees will endeavor to share and incorporate the opinions and views of others in the deliberations and decisions of the Board. Timely reporting out of information will be provided to those who are impacted by Board decisions.

6. Conflict of Interest

It is the ethical and legal duty of each trustee to avoid conflict of interest in all trusteeship responsibilities. Trustees shall not use the schools or the School District's programs for personal advantage or for the advantage of family and friends. When a trustee becomes aware that he or she is in a position that creates a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest, he or she will declare the nature and extent of the conflict at a public board meeting and abstain from deliberating or voting on the issue giving rise to the conflict.

7. Legal Authority of Individual Trustees

Trustees recognize that, as a Corporate Board, the authority to make decisions must only be made within an official meeting of the Board. Individual Trustees or committees of Trustees may not exercise the rights, duties, and powers of the Board. The Chair is the official spokesperson for the Board; other Trustees shall not speak on behalf of the Board unless authorized to act in such a capacity.

8. Support for Board Decisions

Trustees shall present their views through the process of Board debate. Regardless of holding a minority position in debate or casting an opposition vote, Trustees shall accept and endorse the majority decisions of the Board and be supportive of any proposed action or implementation that will ensure decisions have the intended outcome. Trustees also recognize and uphold the integrity and merits of their predecessors' work and achievements.

9. Trustee Professional Development

Trustees will endeavour to attend the BCSTA's Annual AGM, Academy, and Regional Branch Meetings, and take advantage of educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions made available by local or provincial affiliations. Through participating in professional development opportunities, Trustees can enhance their knowledge of Trustee roles and responsibilities and become acquainted with current educational topics and trends.

10. Scope of Delegated Responsibility

Trustees shall respect the authority vested in the role of the Superintendent of Schools and his/her senior staff and shall give the responsibility to manage and operationalize policies and directions, which have been established and evaluated by the Board, to its executive officers.

Trustees will uphold the commitments articulated in the Trustee Code of Ethics and address any violation(s) through the process outlined in the Administrative Procedures.

The Board shall review and sign to this policy annually.

Administrative Procedures

MAINTENANCE OF THE CODE

1. Trustees are encouraged to seek appropriate conciliatory and restorative measures prior to commencing in making an official complaint with regard to a violation of this code of conduct. A violation of this code of conduct may result in the Board instituting, without limiting what follows, any or all of the following sanctions which may only be implemented by a motion of those trustees present at a closed (in-camera) meeting of the Board.

- a. having the board chair write a letter of concern/warning;
- b. having the Board chair write a letter of censure;
- c. having a motion of censure passed and removing the trustee from some or all board committees or other appointments of the Board.

2. The respondent will be given opportunity to reply to the complaint prior to any motions being made.

Resources

School Trustee Oath of Office Regulation - Ministry of Education, Province of BC

Local Government Elections Regulation - Ministry of Education, Province of BC