
HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION

Policy Code: BBF
Policy Title: School Board Member Ethics and Code of Conduct

POLICY HANDBOOK

Cross Reference: BBA
Legal Reference: Education Act S.33, 85,86,87
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POLICY

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION BELIEVES THAT THE BOARD AND ITS MEMBERS WILL CONDUCT THEMSELVES LAWFULLY, WITH INTEGRITY AND HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS, IN ORDER TO MODEL THE BEHAVIORS EXPECTED OF EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS AND TO BUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND CREDIBILITY.

GUIDELINE

1. The code of conduct's has a focus on providing a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments.

REGULATIONS

Further to and in keeping with the Alberta School Boards' Trustee Code of Ethics, the Board also acknowledges the following precepts and principles for Board operation:

1. Board members will serve the interests of the citizens of the entire school organization. Members recognize this responsibility to the whole to be greater than but not limited to, the following: any loyalty a member may have to any other advocacy, interest or political groups;
 - 1.1. loyalty based upon membership on other boards or staffs;
 - 1.2. the personal interest of any Board member who is also a parent or guardian of a student in the organization; and
 - 1.3. being a relative of an employee of the organization.
2. Board members will not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization.
 - 2.1. Trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen
 - 2.2. Members will not assume personal responsibility for resolving operational problems or complaints. Any such complaints will be referred to the Superintendent for investigation and resolution.
 - 2.3. Members will not personally direct any employee or any part of the operational organization.

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- 2.4. When speaking to the press or otherwise publicly sharing personal opinions, members will respect decisions of the Board and will not undermine those decisions.
- 2.5. Members will not publicly express individual negative judgments about Superintendent or employee performance.
3. To build trust among members and to ensure an environment conducive to effective governance, members will:
 - 3.1. focus on issues rather than personalities;
 - 3.2. respect decisions of the Board;
 - 3.3. exercise honesty in all written and interpersonal interaction, never intentionally misleading, surprising or misinforming each other;
 - 3.4. criticize privately, praise publicly;
 - 3.5. make every reasonable effort to protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the organization and one another; and
 - 3.6. never embarrass each other or the organization.
4. The Board and its member’s conduct will contribute to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
5. The Board and its members recognize:
 - 5.1. the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all persons is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world;
 - 5.2. that all persons are equal in: dignity, rights and responsibilities without regard to race, religious beliefs, color, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation;
 - 5.3. that multiculturalism describes the diverse racial and cultural composition of Alberta society and its importance is recognized in Alberta as a fundamental principle and a matter of public policy; and
 - 5.4. that all Albertans should share in an awareness and appreciation of the diverse racial and cultural composition of society and that the richness of life in Alberta is enhanced by sharing that diversity.
6. Members will exercise prudent personal discipline in the performance of their duties, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members.

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7. Members will maintain confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information that otherwise may tend to compromise the integrity or legal standing of the Board, especially those matters discussed in private session.
8. Members shall not discriminate or exhibit an intention to discriminate against a person or a class of persons, or is likely to expose a person or a class of persons to hatred or contempt because of the race, religious beliefs, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation of that person or class of persons.
9. Trustees whose behavior is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board.
 - 9.1. A Trustee wishing to raise an objection to the behavior of a trustee may do so on a point of order.
 - 9.2. The Board may, by resolution, censure a trustee providing that all trustees, excepting the trustee named in the resolution, vote in favour of the resolution.
 - 9.3. Censure may include:
 - 9.3.1. Conversation in a private setting between the offending member and the Board Chair or other individual member;
 - 9.3.2. Discussion in a private session between the offending member and the Board;
 - 9.3.3. Possible removal by the Board from any leadership or committee positions to which the offending member has been appointed or elected;
 - 9.3.4. Censure of the offending member of the Board as a means of separating the Board’s focus and intent from that of the offending member.
 - 9.3.5. Disqualification from remaining as a trustee of the board if that person has breached the code of conduct of the board where the sanction for the breach under the code of conduct may be determined by the board to be disqualification.
10. The Board hereby adopts the attached Code of Conduct as per the Education Act and as adopted by the Alberta School Boards Association (Attachment 1)

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ATTACHMENT 1

Board Member’s Code of Conduct

As a member of Horizon School Division No. 67 Board of Trustees, representing all the citizens of my community and responsible to the electorate through the democratic process, I recognize:

- a) That my fellow citizens have entrusted me, through the electoral process, with the educational development of the children and youth of the community.
- b) That trustees are the children's advocates and my first and greatest concern is the best interest of each and every one of these children without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be.
- c) That trustees are educational leaders who realize that the future welfare of the community, of the Province, and of Canada depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education we provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner.
- d) That legally, the authority of the Board is derived from the Province, which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the school district and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of this community for the exercise of local autonomy.
- e) That I must never neglect my personal obligation to the community and my legal obligation to the Province, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization but that, beyond these, I have a moral and civic obligation to the nation which can remain strong and free only so long as public schools in Canada are kept free and strong.

In view of the foregoing, I will:

- a) Devote time, thought and study to the duties of a school board member so that I may render effective and creditable service.
- b) Work with my fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debate of points of issue.
- c) Consider information received from all sources and base my personal decision upon all available facts in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind, and therefore, abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the board.
- d) Work together with my fellow board members to communicate to the electorate all the facts about their schools, to the end that they will readily provide the finest possible school program, school staff, and school facilities.
- e) Provide leadership to my community through setting goals and developing policies for the educational program and by regularly evaluating these in the light of the wishes and expectations of the community.
- f) Remember at all times that as an individual I have no legal authority outside the meeting of the board, and to conduct my relationships with the school staff, the community, and all media of communication on the basis of this fact.
- g) Resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a school board member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school jurisdiction.
- h) Recognize that the primary function of the board is to establish the policies by which the schools are to be administered, and that the administration of the educational program and

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conduct of school business shall be left to the employed superintendent of schools and his/her professional and non-professional staff.

- i) Encourage active co-operation by citizens, organizations, and the media in the district with respect to establishing policy on current school operations and proposed future developments.
- j) Support my provincial and national school board association for the future of trusteeship in this province and the nation.
- k) Provide to the best of my ability effective school board service to my community in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.