

Boards of Education, previously referred to as school boards, are comprised of locally-elected school trustees. Every community in British Columbia is represented by a local Board of Education. While trustees are individually-elected, they exercise decisional authority when they convene together as a Board of Education.

WHY DO WE HAVE LOCALLY-ELECTED BOARDS OF EDUCATION?

One of British Columbia's great riches is our cultural and community diversity. Publicly-elected Boards of Education have existed for more than a century, and work hard to ensure that decisions affecting students and schools are shaped through consultation with local communities.

Through its community engagement endeavours, each Board of Education is accountable to its citizens for setting the direction and monitoring results for the achievement of students. Student achievement is a central responsibility and prime focus for Boards of Education.

Elected school trustees know their communities. Trustees engage with the public both formally through Board meetings and informally through personal interactions in their communities. As the closest level of government they are in the best position to identify and respond to the educational needs of their communities.

WHAT DO BOARDS OF EDUCATION DO?

School trustees are elected to govern their districts in the interest of improving student achievement.

They do this by engaging their communities in building and maintaining a school system that reflects local priorities, values and expectations.

They listen to their communities, and guide the work of their school district by setting a strategic plan, amending policy as necessary, helping build and approve an annual budget that is aligned with the strategic plan, and reporting back to the public on the progress toward district goals. They hire senior staff, approve job descriptions and administrative objectives, delegate responsibility for administration

and day-to-day matters consistent with those descriptions and objectives, and monitor staff and district performance on a regular basis.

Working within the policies, regulations, and directives set by the provincial government, trustees act as co-governors of the provincial education system by setting the local direction for achievement, allocating available resources, and monitoring local performance.

Locally-elected Boards of Education are the public's voice in public education.

Ultimately, the Board of Education is accountable to the public for achieving district goals, with the public deciding on Election Day whether or not the sitting Board of Education has been successful.

The specific duties of Boards of Education are described in British Columbia's School Act. Among their responsibilities, Boards of Education:

- set local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools
- enact policies governing student conduct and discipline
- employ the staff necessary for school district operations
- establish conditions of employment for employees within the framework of collective bargaining for unionized staff and the regulations regarding compensation for exempt staff
- prepare and approve the district's operating budget and capital plans
- hear appeals from parents and students where a staff decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student
- approve local courses and resource materials for use in the school district

- approve annual school plans
- prepare district achievement contracts and district literacy plans for improving student achievement
- acquire, own and dispose of school property and make decisions on school facilities, subject to Minister's orders.

WHO ARE SCHOOL TRUSTEES?

School trustees are members of your community who have been elected to their local Board of Education. School trustees come from all walks of life and professional backgrounds. Chances are you have community connections with many trustees on your local Board of Education. You may also recognize them from local events.

All trustees are Canadian citizens who care deeply about student success and public education in British Columbia.

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION?

Boards of Education are the only level of government in Canada with a single focus of responsibility: oversight of the public education system. They share this governance role with the provincial government.

Canada's provinces have overall constitutional responsibility for education. Through the School Act, the Provincial Legislature delegates responsibility to the Minister of Education and Boards of Education jointly.

In broad terms, the Ministry of Education is responsible for setting the provincial curriculum and performance standards, and establishing the legal framework within which Boards of Education operate. Boards of Education attend to local delivery of public education in accordance with the School Act. Through this co-governance model, BC has developed one of the finest public education systems in the world.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS AN EMPLOYER?

As an employer of all school district staff, the Board of Education sets the tone for the working environment

through its vision and mission, its goals and plans, and interaction with the employees and the public. As a result, each school district in BC has a unique organizational structure and culture.

A Board of Education establishes policies and regulations that school district employees are required to implement and adhere to. From student codes of conduct to emergency response procedures, your Board of Education is elected to decide how important matters are managed in public schools.

Boards of Education create opportunities within their district by supporting the development of local courses and programs that reflect the unique circumstances and needs of their communities and students.

HOW MIGHT I HAVE CONTACT WITH SCHOOL TRUSTEES?

As a community member you can directly contact your school trustees to share your ideas, concerns or questions.

Boards of Education host a wide range of publicized events that the public is welcome to attend. These include:

- regular public Board of Education meetings
- public consultation meetings
- committee meetings
- open houses
- information sessions

Watch your school district website and community media for dates and times of meetings and events. A list of all district contact information is available on the [BCSTA website](#).

WHEN DO BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE NEXT?

Trustee elections are held throughout the province at the same time as other local government elections. The next election will be held on November 15, 2014.

ABOUT BCSTA



The BC School Trustees Association was founded in 1905. Twenty school trustees representing eight Boards of Education met at the Vancouver School Board office to discuss common problems and ways to improve public education. They made a commitment to work together on matters of shared concern and formed The BC School Trustees Association, the first school trustees' association in Canada. To this day, BCSTA is a strong, collaborative voice advocating on behalf of BC Boards of Education, and providing resources and support to its membership.

BC's 60 Boards of Education are all members of BCSTA. They look to their Association to serve as a strong provincial voice and to influence government by representing the membership on matters affecting public education. In addition to advocacy, BCSTA provides its membership with timely information on issues, educational programs for school trustees and their staff, legal and legislative services and in-district consultation services.

For more information on BCSTA and its services, visit us at www.bcsta.org.

To learn more about locally-elected trusteeship and the valuable work of Boards of Education, please visit [LearnBCSTA](#).