



ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

The role of the Trustee is to contribute to Limestone District School Board as it carries out its mandate to achieve its mission and goals related to student success and the development of an improved 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.

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. Although a Trustee must serve their community as an elected representative, their 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

- 1.0.0 The Trustee shall:
 - 1.1.0 Uphold and comply with all policies and procedures of the Board.
 - 1.2.0 Become familiar with Limestone District School Board policies, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate effectively in Board business.
 - 1.3.0 Normally respond to internal Board emails and electronic invitations, such as from the Director of Education or designate, and Board or Committee Chair or Vice-Chair within 48 hours of receipt or by such later date as reasonably stipulated in the communication.
 - 1.4.0 Not attempt to become involved in the day-to-day management of the system.
 - 1.5.0 Refer queries or issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion, decision or delegation.
 - 1.6.0 Where appropriate, 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.
 - 1.7.0 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.
 - 1.8.0 Participate in and contribute to the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of students in Limestone District School Board.
 - 1.9.0 Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture within the Board.
 - 1.10.0 Bring to the attention of the Board any issues that may affect Limestone District School Board, and interpret the needs of the community to the Board.
 - 1.11.0 Support decisions of the Board and work diligently to ensure that the decisions or policies are implemented and monitored.

- 1.12.0 Exercise authority within defined limits when delegated such responsibility.
- 1.13.0 Participate in Board and Trustee development so that the quality of leadership and service in Limestone District School Board will be enhanced.
- 1.14.0 Express negative judgments of staff or staff performance only as that performance is assessed against explicit Board policies by the official process, or during “in-camera” sessions of the Board. Such communication shall be made directly to the Director.
- 1.15.0 Not divulge confidential information which is obtained in the capacity as a Board member, and not discuss those matters outside the meetings of the Board or the Board’s committees.

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.

Last reviewed: July 2021