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[www.saskschoolboards.ca](http://www.saskschoolboards.ca)  
[bbashutskd@saskschoolboards.ca](mailto:bbashutskd@saskschoolboards.ca)

# Becoming a Better Board Chair

## Module 12

Participate in this seminar to explore strategies for becoming a better board chair. Module 12 workshop and resource materials include these important topics:

- Characteristics of an effective chair;
- The chair's leadership role and skills;
- Tips for better organization;
- Strategies for policy leadership; and,
- Developing the chair's role as board spokesperson.

STEWARDSHIP

RELATIONSHIP

LEADERSHIP



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# An Effective Board Chair

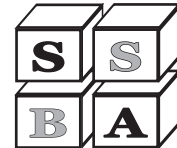
In this seminar, we will examine the skills and attitudes demonstrated by effective leaders and board Chairs. The role of the board chair is examined from four perspectives:

- Some say, an effective board Chair is a good *Captain*, a leader who helps others achieve defined goals.
- Some say an effective board Chair is a good *Organizer*, a person who can run efficient and productive board meetings.
- Some say an effective board Chair is a good *Policy Leader* who clearly understands the roles and responsibilities of both the board and of the school division administration.
- Some say an effective Chair is a good *Spokesperson* who can skillfully and accurately speak on behalf of the board to the media and the public.

Throughout this seminar, you will be invited to think about ‘How does this apply to me and my school board?’ Time will be provided at the end of the day to outline an action plan to act on what you have learned.

## Building Board Knowledge

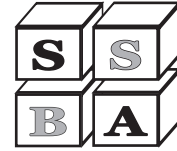
1. *What are the duties of the chair of the board of education?*



# Board Chair as Captain

*We can learn to be leaders. We can follow the model of other successful leaders by behaving in a manner which motivates the people we work with to do the very best job possible.*

## Building Board Knowledge



1. *What are the characteristics of an effective board chair?*

2. *What is my preferred leadership style?*

## The Leadership Challenge

(From *The School Board Member Handbook* by Dr. Larry Thomas, *EduServ Inc.*, 1994, p. 64)

	Disagree		Agree	
1. I assert my values.	1	2	3	4
2. I effect change through a cause I pursue.	1	2	3	4
3. I articulate a vision through my goals.	1	2	3	4
4. I believe I can and do create my own future.	1	2	3	4
5. I am self-confident.	1	2	3	4
6. I inspire others to be the best they can be.	1	2	3	4
7. I am decisive and action-oriented.	1	2	3	4
8. I listen.	1	2	3	4
9. I delegate.	1	2	3	4
10. I am a risk-taker.	1	2	3	4
11. I empower others.	1	2	3	4

# Board Chair as Organizer

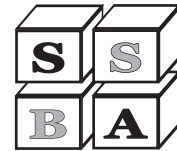
“The Chair plays a key role in the operation of the board of education meeting. The Chair sets the tone and the climate for the meeting through fair, reasonable and impartial treatment of all board members...”

- From *Successful School Board Meetings*, p. 32

“Quality of leadership should be the determining factor in deciding how long a person should continue to serve as Chair... School boards should not play ‘musical chairs’ with the board Chair.”

- From *Successful School Board Meetings*, p. 33

## Building Board Knowledge



*In addition to having an effective chair, a well-planned agenda is a critical component in ensuring a successful school board meeting. We need to ask:*

1. *Does this agenda reflect the major issues which require school board action?*
  
2. *Does the preparation of the agenda involve board members, staff, and, where appropriate, interested citizens and organizations?*
  
3. *Do board members receive the agenda and related materials at least three days before the meetings?*
  
4. *Does the agenda provide for a meeting of no more than three hours?*

Who should chair the board? How does your board select the chair?

- A. By popularity on the board – whoever gets the most votes;
- B. By seniority on the board – the longest service record;
- C. By competency as chair – the most skilled; or,
- D. By rotation – everyone on the board takes their turn.

## Dealing With Delegations

Delegations grow up around sensitive issues and sometimes express themselves in harsh words. Special tact is essential.

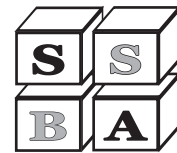
Rather than letting itself be stampeded into a quick action it may later regret, the board should stick to its established procedure for putting the matter on the agenda for study and future deliberation and action.

A group petition does not necessarily represent the community's prevailing view. However, a petition may represent a minority view that is legitimate and fully deserving of school board accommodation.

Whatever action the board ultimately decides to take, the petitioners are entitled to a full explanation of the reasons.

### Building Board Knowledge

1. *How can the board chair make visitors and other delegates feel welcome at board meetings?*

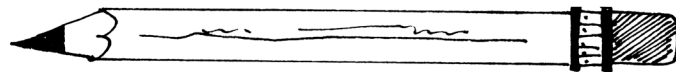


### Chairing the Board Meeting: Personal Performance

(Adapted from *Development and Direction for Boards of Directors* by Dr. John E. Tropman, The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 1991, p. 79)

	Disagree		Agree	
1. As chair, I lead the group to consider alternatives and support board members both in their presentation and ideas presented.	1	2	3	4
2. As chair, I model appropriate board behaviour to other members of the board.	1	2	3	4
3. As chair, I work to synthesize ideas rather than promote pet ideas/projects.	1	2	3	4
4. As chair, I facilitate task accomplishment by all members of the board rather than by doing it alone.	1	2	3	4
5. As chair, I research both issues and attitudes of board members in preparation for the meeting.	1	2	3	4
6. As chair, I present a balanced representation of the board to the outside, avoiding one-sided and intemperate statements to the public and media.	1	2	3	4
7. As chair, I ensure that all board members have an equal opportunity to be heard on any issue.	1	2	3	4
8. As chair, I allow more time for large issues and less time for smaller issues during the meeting.	1	2	3	4
9. When everyone has had a chance to speak at least once on an issue, I as chair summarize and focus the discussion.	1	2	3	4
10. As chair, I follow Robert's Rules of Order or some other orderly procedure.	1	2	3	4

### Notes





## Board Chair Performance and Effectiveness Assessment

	<b>Process</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>People</b>
<b>Distinguished</b>	Discussion is animated but focused. The chair periodically summarizes consensus points, checks for support and then moves on to the next topic. Robert's Rules of Order are practiced for voting issues.	Consideration of relevant information and research is comprehensive. Decisions for board action are summarized and approved by motion.	All board members participate in a dialogue to consider all points of view. Appropriate resource people are invited to present ideas to the board.
<b>Proficient</b>	A dynamic pace allows for discussion while achieving agenda results in a timely manner. Efforts are made to seek common agreement or use Robert's Rules of Order for voting. Processes are fair to all.	Relevant information and research is considered. A decision for board action is approved by motion.	All board members have an opportunity to express their point of view. Resource people have an opportunity to present ideas to the board.
<b>Apprentice</b>	Chair makes visible efforts to follow an agenda and stay within time limits. Some discussions wander into unrelated topics. Votes are taken.	A decision for board action is approved by motion.	2-3 people dominate discussion - others are invited to contribute.
<b>Novice</b>	Chair encourages others to support his/her ideas. Discussion moves forward periodically.	Many issues and opinions are discussed – decisions for board action are not explicit.	Talk is dominated by 1 – 2 people.

## Learning to Listen and Paraphrase

An effective chair learns to listen closely to what people are saying to be able to summarize the main ideas presented.

### Principles of Paraphrasing

- Attend fully;
- Listen with the intention to understand;
- Capture the essence of the message;
- Reflect the essence of voice tone and gestures;
- Make the paraphrase shorter than the original statement; and,
- Paraphrase before asking a question.

### A paraphrase sends three messages:

- I am listening;
- I am interested/ I care; and,
- I understand you (or I'm trying to).

We can develop our paraphrasing skills by increasing our consciousness of our internal strategies for attending to, sifting, and organizing a speaker's content.

The following are examples of words or phrases that are used to begin a paraphrase. Try using the following paraphrasing openers:

- So...
- You're feeling as if...
- In other words...
- You're saying that...
- You're seeing...
- As you...
- You're thinking...
- You're hoping...
- You're wondering...
- You're wanting...
- You're suggesting...
- Recapping...
- You're concerned about...

## **An Effective Meeting Checklist**

(From *The School Board Member Handbook* by Dr. Larry Thomas, EduServ Inc., 1994, p. 166)

- 1. The purpose of the meeting is clearly stated and understood.
- 2. There is a clear indication of who will be attending the meeting, and in what capacity.
- 3. An agenda, clearly stating the start time and end time, is published and circulated in advance of the meeting.
- 4. The agenda package contains all of the relevant background information that will be needed by school board members to properly discuss and debate the issues at the board meeting and arrive at a decision.
- 5. The meeting starts and ends on time.
- 6. There is a Chair who takes control of the meeting.
- 7. Participants are encouraged to express concerns, ask questions and make suggestions.
- 8. Discussion and debate are focused on the issues at hand.
- 9. Sufficient time is allotted for discussion on each agenda item.
- 10. There is a recording secretary who takes accurate notes of the discussion, and particularly of decisions made.
- 11. Minutes of the meeting are promptly published and distributed.
- 12. There is a distribution list indicating who is to receive a copy of the minutes.
- 13. Regardless of the emotions expressed at the meeting, the Chair ends the meeting on a positive note.
- 14. A summary of “Meeting Highlights” is prepared and distributed to local boards of trustees, school councils, schools, local newspapers, etc.

## Meeting Evaluation

(Developed by the National School Boards Association from *Successful School Board Meetings* by Stuart A. Anderson, p. 55)

	Disagree		Agree	
	1	2	3	4
1. Planning: Has the board developed adequate planning procedures for determining agendas and preparing back-up reports and briefings?	1	2	3	4
2. Pre-meeting dissemination: Has the board developed procedures for getting meeting materials and notices in the hands of board members, the press and public leaders two or three days in advance of meeting dates.	1	2	3	4
3. Pre-meeting conference: Do the chair and director confer to review upcoming business, to clarify agenda items and to anticipate possible problem areas?	1	2	3	4
4. Setting: Has the board found and furnished the best setting for meetings?	1	2	3	4
5. Homework: Do all board members study the agenda, read the reports, and come to meetings prepared to contribute to discussions and not waste meeting time by going over matters that were already included in the pre-meeting folder?	1	2	3	4
6. Public involvement: Has the board established an orderly method for the public to be heard at board meetings? Does the chair make visitors feel welcome?	1	2	3	4
7. Proper role: Has the board developed a clear policy as to the kinds of matters which need not be brought to the board's attention and which may be handled by administrative action?	1	2	3	4
8. Recommendations: Does the director expedite business by specifying his/her "Recommended Action" on each major agenda item?	1	2	3	4
9. Pace: Do meetings begin on time? During meetings, does the board chair keep an eye on the clock so that adequate time can be provided for important matters?	1	2	3	4
10. Clarification: Does the chair clarify each agenda item? Does he/she clarify – for the benefit of the board, press and public – specific goals to be achieved? Is he/she adept at summarizing arguments before bringing matters to a vote.	1	2	3	4
11. Control: Does the chair keep discussions to the subject at hand? Does he/she bring board members to order when they interrupt a speaker – or who talks while the speaker is talking? Is the chair firm when required?	1	2	3	4
12. Policies: Has the board developed an adequate set of written policies or by-laws on Board Meeting Procedures	1	2	3	4

## Planning an Effective Meeting

You are the board chair who is planning the next board meeting. Organize the issues and questions listed in the left-hand column into an effective meeting. The meeting should not go beyond three hours.

### Possible Agenda Items for the Meeting (example)

- Review the minutes of the last meeting
- Trustee Williams has informed you that students may have transported alcohol on the bus earlier today.
- A delegation from the Fairtown local board has questions about rumoured plans for grade discontinuance.
- The director of education has asked for the board's approval for the high school ski trip next Friday.
- The board has to determine the number of school board members who will participate in the five day Conference in Saskatoon.
- A suspension has been imposed by the principal for 10 school days. The director has confirmed the suspension and recommended an extension. The student's parents will be at the meeting.
- Checks have to be signed.
- Trustee Williams has provided notice of intent to make a motion regarding his plan for how technology should be used in the school division.
- Approve the learning and activity program for the high school.
- A new reporter will be at the meeting.
- Grade 3 teacher Mrs. Smith has requested a maternity leave.

### Organize the Agenda

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## **Sample Policy: Board Meeting Agenda**

(Adapted from *Successful School Board Meetings* by Stuart Anderson, pp. 19-20)

The agenda for board meetings shall be prepared by the Director of Education in consultation with the board Chair. Items submitted by board members to the Director or Chair shall be placed on the agenda. Others may convey suggestions for possible inclusion on the agenda. Such suggestions must be received by the Director at least one week prior to the board meeting.

Items for discussion or action may be added to the agenda at the start of any regular meeting at the request of the Director or any board member upon the majority approval of those members present.

Copies of the agenda shall be mailed or delivered with adequate data and backup information to each board member at least 72 hours prior to each regular meeting.

Board members shall be expected to read the information provided them, and to contact the Director to request additional information that may be deemed necessary to assist them in their decision-making responsibilities.

Copies of the agenda shall be available at the meeting for the convenience of visitors.

The order of business at regular board meetings shall be:

1. Call to order.
2. Approval of minutes of previous meeting.
3. Visitors and communications.
4. Report of the Director.
5. Action items.
6. Information items.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Adjournment.

Upon consent of a majority of members present, the regular order of business at any meeting may be suspended.

# Quick Reference Guide to Robert's Rules of Order

(From the Pennsylvania School Boards Association *Bulletin*, May-June, 1979)

	ORDER OF MOTIONS	MAY APPLY TO FOLLOWING MOTIONS	MAY INTERRUPT ONE WHO HAS FLOOR	MOVER MUST BE RECOGNIZED	REQUIRES A SECOND	DEBATABLE	VOTE REQUIRED	MAY BE RENEWED	MOTIONS THAT MAY APPLY TO IT
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS	1. TO FIX TIME OF NEXT MEETING	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Not for same time	Amend, Reconsider
	2. TO ADJOURN	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Yes, after progress	None
	3. QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE	None	Yes, if necessary	No	No	No, but a resulting motion is	Decided by chair	After progress	None apply to question of privilege but all may apply to resulting privileged motion
	4. TO CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY	Any special or general order	Yes, to call for a special order	No	No	No	None --- takes 2/3 vote to postpone special order	Yes, except special cases	None except to postpone orders
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS	5. RISE TO A POINT OF ORDER	Any motion or act	Yes	No	No	No	None unless appealed, then majority	No	None
	6. APPEAL	Any decision by the chair	Yes	No	Yes	No	Majority	No	Lay on table, close debate, reconsider
	7. TO SUSPEND THE RULES	Any motion where needed	No	Yes	Yes	No	Usually 2/3 (see Constitution)	No, except by unanimous consent	None
	8. TO CREATE SPECIAL ORDERS	Main motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	After progress	All
	9. TO WITHDRAW (or renew) A MOTION	Any motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	After progress	Reconsider
	10. VOTING - "Division" Motion To Ballot	Any		No	Division, no; Ballot, yes	No	Majority	Does not apply	None
11. OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION	Main question and questions of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 in negative	No	Reconsider	
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS	12A. TO LAY ON THE TABLE	Main question, appeals, questions of privilege or reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
	12B. TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE	Only to motion that was tabled	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
	13. CLOSE DEBATE	Any debatable motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority	After progress	Reconsider
	14. TO POSTPONE TO CERTAIN DAY	Main motion, questions of privilege or reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	After progress	Amend, reconsider, limit or close debate
	15. TO REFER	Main motion, questions of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	After progress	Amend, reconsider, limit, or close debate
	16. TO AMEND OR SUBSTITUTE	Main motion, limit debate, refer, postpone definitely, fix time of next meeting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Amend, reconsider, limit or close debate
	17. TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY	Main motion, questions of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, reconsider ["I" vote only]
18. MAIN QUESTION (or motion)	No other motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Not at same session	All	
19. TO RECONSIDER	Any motion except adjourn, suspend rules, lay on table	Yes, for entry	No	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, lay on table, postpone definitely	
20. TO RESCIND	Main motions, appeals, questions of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Not at same session	All	
21. ELECTIONS (Nominations)	None	No	Yes	No	No			None	

Reprinted with permission from the Pennsylvania School Boards Association *Bulletin*, May-June, 1979)

## Conducting Meetings: A Quiz

“Rules should be applied and interpreted so as to permit a majority to accomplish its ultimate purpose within a reasonable period of time but only after allowing the minority reasonable opportunity to express its views on the question at issue.”

- Lehr Fess in the foreword to *Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance* by O. Garfield Jones

Test your knowledge of Robert’s Rules of Order and *The Education Act, 1995* with the following quiz on conducting meetings:

1. A motion may be made by?
  - A. Only the chair
  - B. Any member of the board
  - C. Any member of the board with the exception of the chair
2. When can a question or issue be discussed?
  - A. After it has been submitted in the form of a motion
  - B. Any member of the board
  - C. Any member of the board with the exception of the chair
3. A motion must be stated in the positive?
  - A. Always
  - B. Usually
  - C. Never
4. Who may vote on a motion?
  - A. All members of the board with the exception of the chair
  - B. All members including the chair
5. When must amendments to a motion be proposed?
  - A. As soon as the motion is made
  - B. Any time before the vote on the motion
  - C. Following the vote on the motion
6. When can an amendment not be made?
  - A. Adding words to the original motion
  - B. Deleting words from the original motion
  - C. Deleting and replacing words in the original motion
  - D. Changing the intent of the original motion
7. How many amendments to a motion may be made?
  - A. One amendment to the motion
  - B. An amendment to an amendment to the motion (two)
  - C. An amendment to an amendment to an amendment to the motion (three)



8. True/False: An amendment to a motion must be voted on prior to a vote on the motion.
- A. True
  - B. False
9. When must amendments to a motion be proposed?
- A. Always
  - B. Only on important matters
  - C. Only upon request
10. Who has the authority to withdraw a motion?
- A. Request of the chair
  - B. Request of any board member
  - C. Request of the mover
  - D. Unanimous consent of the board
11. Who decides on whether a “point of order” shall be observed?
- A. Chair
  - B. Maker of the point
  - C. Unanimous consent of the board
  - D. Chair, following debate
12. Can a ruling on a “point of order” be appealed?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
13. If a motion is rejected can it be reintroduced at the same meeting?
- A. Yes, by making a motion to reconsider
  - B. Yes, by percentage support of members present
  - C. No
14. Who can table a motion?
- A. Chair
  - B. Any board member
  - C. A majority of members
15. Strictly speaking, who may speak to a motion more than once?
- A. Mover
  - B. Any board member
  - C. Chair

16. How many members of a board must be present to make the procedures valid?

- A. Any number
- B. All
- C. One-half
- D. A quorum

17. Can a motion to adjourn be debated?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Sometimes

18. What is the minimum number of times that a board of education must meet in one year?

- A. 2
- B. 4
- C. 6
- D. 8

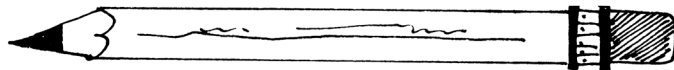
19. Is a vote taken 'in camera' or 'in committee' legal and binding?

- A. Yes
- B. No

20. In the absence of the chair and vice-chair, who chairs the meeting?

- A. The member with greatest seniority
- B. The member who made the coffee
- C. The person elected to do so by the remaining members

**Notes**



# Board Chair as Policy Leader

When we define the role of the board and the role of the administration, simply categorizing the distinction in terms of “policy decisions” and “administrative decisions” doesn’t always work.

In other words, it’s too simplistic to say, “Boards make policy and administrators implement policy.”

Instead, we need to understand that boards of education must perform three functions:

- Legislative;
- Executive; and,
- Judicial.

And that within each function there will be a role for both the board and the administration.

For each of the following determine:

- Whether the function is Legislative, Executive or Judicial in nature; and,
- Within each, who is responsible for the decision-making; the board or the administration?

		Leg.	Exe.	Jud.
1. Notify a non-tenured teacher that, unless improvement is made, action will be taken to terminate his or her services.	BD			
	AD			
2. Authorize weekend use of school facilities for activities by a religious organization, charging only the actual out-of-pocket costs for their use.	BD			
	AD			
3. Change attendance boundaries that will cause 10 percent of the population to attend different schools the following year.	BD			
	AD			
4. Formulate and publish administrative regulations to implement board policy on what kinds of student organizations and clubs will be permitted in the division.	BD			
	AD			
5. Conduct a show cause hearing for a principal demotion.	BD			
	AD			
6. Grant a teacher request for one day off, with pay, for personal leave.	BD			
	AD			
7. Agree to waive the penalty clause against a contractor for being late in completing a building contract because of extenuating circumstances not contemplated in the contract.	BD			
	AD			
8. Establish a parents’ advisory committee to recommend division goals.	BD			
	AD			
9. Permit a school to replace a major portion of the maps, films and written materials (other than books) for the social studies curriculum in order to better meet division goals.	BD			
	AD			

# Board Chair as Spokesperson

*In the vast majority of school divisions, the Chair is at least partially – if not wholly – responsible for speaking to the media on behalf of the board of education.*

## To Do and Not to Do as Spokesperson

### Do

- Avoid jargon;
- Remember that TV and radio cannot use long statements;
- Remember who, what, when, where, why and how;
- Return phone calls promptly;
- Try to get to know your reporters;
- Prepare written copies of statements;
- Contact the reporter first if there is an error; and,
- Accept suggestions and constructive criticism from media people

### Don't

- Expect miracles;
- Fail to cooperate;
- Lie;
- Use the reporter as your scapegoat;
- Play favourites or try to play one reporter or media company against another;
- Threaten to “cut-off” news;
- Assume anything is off the record;
- Tell a reporter how to write or frame the story; and,
- Blame the reporter for a poor or misleading headline because often the reporter who writes the story, does not write the headline.

## Plain Talk: Practical Language for Talking to the Media

To make sure that you don't erect a language barrier between the local press and your board, use "plain talk". For the following questions, identify what you believe to be wrong with the answer provided. How would you simplify the following examples into "plain talk"?

1. What is the purpose of this field trip?

- Answer: "Our school district believes that significant enrichment of the educational experience occurs when out-of-facility functions include multiple levels of participation between our personnel and our patrons."
- The Problem:
- Your Answer:

2. What will the district do if the teachers walkout?

- Answer: "We might try to keep classes open by using volunteers or supervisory personnel. If it is possible, we might close the schools and try to make up the time by adjusting the school calendar at a later date. We have a number of options, and these are some of them."
- The Problem:
- Your Answer:

3. You voted against closing the school and lost. What will you do now?

- Answer: "I plan to report to my electors and see if I can get the matter reconsidered. As I said in the board meeting, I think this is a terrible inconvenience to the students and parents involved."
- The Problem:
- Your Answer:

## ***E-News and The School Trustee***

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association produces *E-News* as an electronic means to keep members informed.

*E-News* is intended to provide information on issues and events important to board of education members and educators. *E-News* updates are like a “news release” for boards of education.

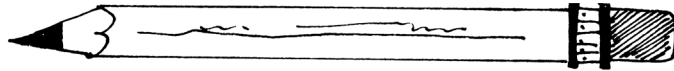
Board members can use this information to discuss issues in their divisions and keep informed on matters provincially.

*E-News* are sent by email to all board of education members and senior administrators. The Association also uses email to send news releases to media and MLAs, as well as to members. *E-News* and news releases are available on the Association’s website.

In 2008, the Association re-introduced *The School Trustee*, a newsletter. This newsletter is made available in hardcopy to all board members and school division offices as well as on the SSBA website.

Members are also encouraged to use the website and email to gather other types of information on the Association and its services.

**Notes**



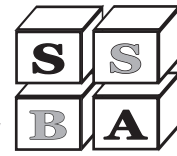
## Board Chair and School<sup>PLUS</sup>

School<sup>PLUS</sup> gives a new image of the board of education. It presents a school division that is focused on demonstrable success and well being for all children and youth in the community. It challenges school boards to adopt a policy governance model with open, inclusive participation in policy development and shared decision-making. It emphasizes the modelling and development of adaptive leadership in those assigned with leadership responsibility and those who emerge as leaders in ever-changing situations and roles. It requires skills in public speaking, listening, motivation, interpersonal relations, organization and communication. It demands a public presence within the school division, the schools and the community. These expectations are particularly germane to the position of board chair.

The challenge of board chair leadership in a School<sup>PLUS</sup> school division lies in internalizing and adopting the philosophy, principles and direction of School<sup>PLUS</sup>. The creation of a transparent and publicly accountable school division may present a less than expected but improving school division which may invite criticism and controversy. Work with groups of diverse interest will present the challenge of creating consensus out of controversy and conflict. Expansion of the school division mandate to include all children and youth in the community requires new community relations and partnership skills of the board and particularly of the board chair. School<sup>PLUS</sup> – envisaged partnership goes beyond dusting off old partnerships between organizations and schools in that those with the Saskatchewan government human service providers is now more formal and resource-supported with expected demonstrable indicators of success. Decentralization of administrative functions to the Director of Education and to school principals presents a leadership requirement of confidence and trust balanced by monitoring the results and adoption of policy leading to improvement.

The Board Chair must know and be committed to the philosophy and principles of School<sup>PLUS</sup> and model these within the school division and in the community in order to provide the leadership and motivation to colleagues, staff and the community. It is a prerequisite to a successful School<sup>PLUS</sup> school division.

## Building Board Knowledge



1. *Is the purpose of public schooling clear to me and my fellow school board members? Do we understand why locally elected boards are so important to the democratic, community control of publicly-funded education?*
  
2. *Is my attention continually focused on the school district's philosophy, mission, goals and policies? Are we focusing on the big questions such as, "What does the community need and want from their education system?" and, "What, as a school board, do we believe in?"*
  
3. *Do I refrain from involving myself in administrative concerns by keeping my primary focus on policy matters? Are we focused on the "higher order" decisions in the Legislative, Executive and Judicial functions?*
  
4. *Do I focus on results?*
  
5. *Is what I am doing as a school board member/chair making a difference?*

- From *School Board Member Handbook* by Dr. Larry Thomas, p. 195



## Board Chair Self-Assessment Instrument

(From *Research Report #97-03*, May 1997, p. 29)

For each statement, the left column asks you to assess your performance ('How we am I doing?'). In the right column you are asked to determine the significance of the statement for an effective board Chair ('How important is this?'). Shade the number representing the most appropriate response.

### Performance

- 1 = Low Performance
- 2 = Fair Performance
- 3 = Good Performance
- 4 = High Performance

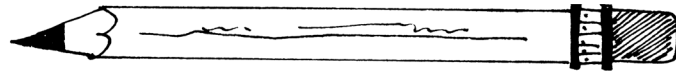
### Significance

- 1 = Of little or no importance
- 2 = Of some importance
- 3 = Very important
- 4 = Of critical importance

① ② ③ ④	I do a good job of keeping up-to date on information and issues concerning the board.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that I am well informed about the agenda prior to each meeting of the board.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I refrain from dominating discussion, or becoming excessively involved in articulating my viewpoint while chairing board meetings.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	For the most part, I remain impartial during the course of discussions in regular board meetings.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that I set adequate time aside from my own schedule to perform the duties of chair.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I do a good job of moving meetings along at a reasonable pace.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that proper rules of procedure are followed for each public meeting of the board.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that all trustees are given an adequate opportunity to contribute to board discussions.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that the right of individuals to dissent is honoured during all meetings.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I do an effective job as spokesperson for the board to the public.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I communicate effectively with the media on matters relating to school system issues and directions.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that board meetings begin on time.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I do not allow board meetings to become excessively long.	① ② ③ ④

① ② ③ ④	I ensure that delegations and presenters at the board meetings are treated hospitably and respectfully.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I ensure that clear rules are followed for public presentations.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I do a good job of securing the support of other school board members for my work as board chair.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I am well informed as to the statutory responsibilities of boards of education.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I am familiar with the Code of Ethics governing the behaviour of trustees and boards in this province.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I do a good job of organizing and monitoring the committee structure on the board.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I keep up-to-date on current educational issues.	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	I am aware of the distinction between “higher order” [policy] and “lower order” [administrative] decisions in the Legislative, Executive and Judicial functions of the board.	① ② ③ ④

**Notes**



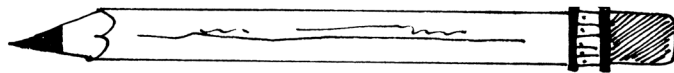
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**Answers to 'Meeting Quiz' (pp. 14-16)**

1. B – Any member of the board may make a motion. The chairman is a member and as such retains all the rights and privileges of any other members.
2. C – Strictly speaking, a parliamentary body cannot discuss a question until it is before the body in the form of a motion. However, in many instances it may be necessary to discuss an issue prior to framing a motion.
3. B – A motion should usually be stated in the positive. The conventional wisdom is that a negative motion, if tied in a vote, is decided in the negative and thus, results in a double negative - or positive-vote. For example, a tied vote on the motion: “Not to build a new school” would result in building a new school. More useful is the idea that a tied vote results in no action, the basis for this being that without the will of the majority, no action should be taken.
4. B – All members including the chairman may vote. A person may abstain from a vote, but note that when you do this you are agreeing to abide by the will of the majority.
5. B
6. D – An amendment cannot change the original intent or scope of a motion.
7. B – However, once an amendment to an amendment is considered, a new amendment to the amendment may be considered and so on. The principle here is that the meeting can only keep so much in mind at one time.
8. A/True – The sequence is top-down and is a matter of precedence. The trick is to know what motions have precedence. Amendments always have precedence over main motions.
9. C – A vote is recorded when requested by any member. The request is not voted on.
10. C – Strictly speaking, so long as the chairman has not stated the motion it may be withdrawn by the mover. But, once stated by the chair the motion “is in the possession of the board” and can only be withdrawn by unanimous consent.
11. A – There is no debate on a “point of order”. The chair considers the point and rules. A “point of order” may interrupt a speaker and must be dealt with immediately unless a question of privilege or motion to adjourn is asked or made. No vote is taken.

12. A – Any member may appeal the chair’s ruling on a “point of order.”
13. A – By making a motion to reconsider put by a member who initially voted with the majority. The motion to reconsider must be passed by a simple majority.
14. C – A majority of members can table a motion. A “tabling” motion can apply to appeals, main motions, reconsiderations and to notices of privilege. A tabling motion cannot be debated or amended. If you want to table a motion until a certain time (say, next meeting) this should be indicated in the tabling motion.
15. A – Only the mover may speak more than once. Members speak once, then the mover closes debate. If you want to “discuss” a motion, then a motion to suspend the rules is in order. A motion to suspend involves no debate and requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
16. D – Quorum is a legal term that requires a certain amount of people in attendance to make a motion or procedure valid.
17. C – This is a privileged motion and is only debatable when the time for the next meeting has not been fixed. This motion supersedes all other motions and requires a simple majority to pass.
18. C
19. B
20. C

**Notes**



# Reflection

Three key ideas from this module are:

- 
- 
- 

What kind of chair do I want to be?

What are some of the principles that will guide my efforts?

What do I need to know?

**My Personal Plan of Action**

In order to strengthen the governance of our board of education, I make a commitment to:

<b>State the Area You Want to Improve</b>	<b>I Commit Myself to the Following</b>	<b>When Will I Do This?</b>	<b>How Will I Know I Have Been Successful</b>