

The Way Things Work: An Orientation for New Board Members

Module 1

Participate in this seminar to learn more about being a board member and the organization of education in Saskatchewan. Module 1 workshop and resource materials include these important topics:

- The organization of education in Saskatchewan;
- The key educational organizations in Saskatchewan;
- The role of the school board;
- The role of the individual members of the board; and,
- Tips to help new board members get off to a good start.

STEWARDSHIP

RELATIONSHIP

LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

Module 1 is designed to equip Saskatchewan school board members with an understanding of trusteeship and the way that Saskatchewan's K-12 education system is organized.

The information in this handbook complements the ideas outlined in the *Handbook for School Board Members 2009–2012*.

This module offers a brief overview of the role of the board in Saskatchewan's education system. For more information, visit the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) website at www.saskschoolboards.ca.

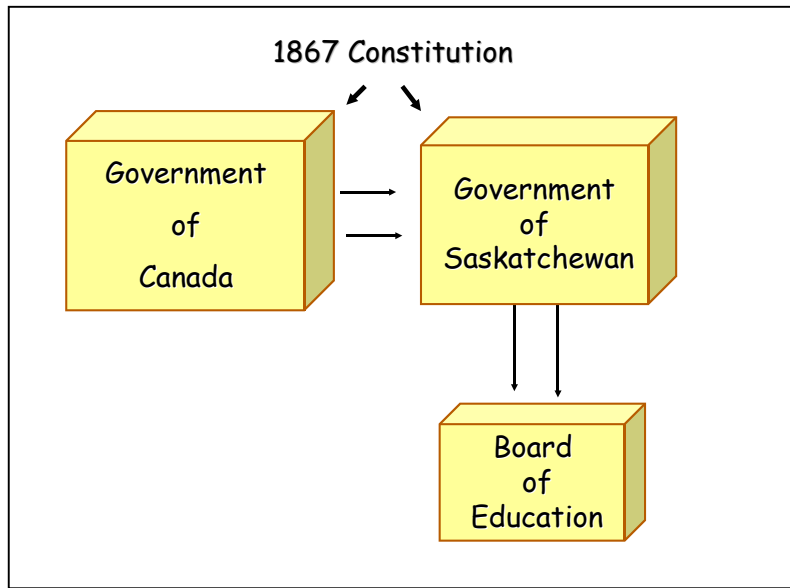
The SSBA website is the primary source of information that includes:

- Links to most of the other educational organizations mentioned in this handbook;
- Sample policies and innovative ideas from Saskatchewan school divisions;
- Key information and research on educational topics for board members; and,
- Information about Association activities and events.

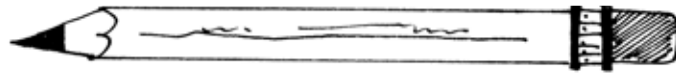
The Education System

Structure of the System

The Education Act, 1995 and its accompanying regulations provides a framework for K-12 education in Saskatchewan. This act describes the duties of the Minister of Education, boards of education and councils scolaires, principals, teachers and students. It describes processes that occur within the education system such as organization and management of schools, hiring and firing of teachers, school finance, and collective bargaining.



Notes



The school division is the foundation of Saskatchewan’s publicly-funded education system.

As of December 2009, there are 29 school divisions in the province. School divisions fall into three categories: public, separate and Francophone.

Unless a taxpayer has designated otherwise, his or her property taxes are directed to the public board of education in the area.

Members of the minority faith who have established a separate school division pay their taxes to the separate system. In most areas, the Catholic faith is the minority faith.

The separate school divisions cover the same geographic areas as some of the public school divisions. For example, most Saskatchewan cities have both a public and a separate school division.

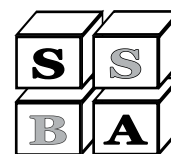
The Conseil des écoles fransaskoises (CEF) is organized by constitutional rights holders. There CEF is the only Francophone school division in Saskatchewan. It covers the majority of Francophone schools throughout Saskatchewan.

School divisions are governed by an elected board of education (also called a “school board” or “conseil scolaire” in the CEF).

The elected members of a board of education are officially known as “members of the board of education,” but in everyday language, they are often called school trustees.

Section 140 of *The Education Act, 1995* sets out the terms and duties of school community councils which are primarily advisory. However, boards of education may delegate a wide range of responsibilities to school community councils.

Building Board Knowledge



1. How would you describe your position?

2. How would you describe your school division?

Saskatchewan School Divisions

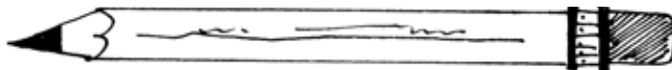
School Division Type	Number of School Divisions
Public	18
Separate	10
Francophone	1
Total	29

Number of School Divisions by Size

Number of Schools Per Division	Number of School Divisions	Total Number of Students
1-10	11	12,634
11-20	2	5,310
21-30	4	25,169
31-40	6	41,496
More than 40	6	74,848

Recommended Resource: A comprehensive source of information about education in Saskatchewan is the *Saskatchewan Education Indicators: Prekindergarten to Grade 12* report. The most recent report in 2009 is available online. You can find the report by typing ‘2009 Saskatchewan Education Indicators Report’ in your preferred search engine (i.e. Google, Yahoo, etc.).

Notes



Education Finance

School divisions are responsible for the operation of schools in their area and for the quality of the education program. The money that school divisions need to operate schools comes primarily from the provincial government, while two percent is other revenue sources.

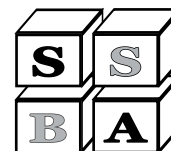
Provincial grants to boards of education are provided through education funding. A new K-12 formula for calculating grants for each board of education is in the process of being determined and is anticipated for 2011/12.

Other revenue is generated from interest on investments, education service agreements with First Nations or other school divisions, donations and business partnerships, school fees, and/or fundraising.

Recommended Resource: For more information about education finance, review Module 4 – *Education Finance and the Board’s Role*. It can be found on the SSBA website.

Building Board Knowledge

1. *In your school division, what is the total expenditure on operations?*



Goals of Education for Saskatchewan

The Goals of Education for Saskatchewan on the following page were developed in 1984 as the first component in the curriculum renewal process that has become known as Core Curriculum. These goals are intended to guide the development of provincial and local policies and programs.

The board approves the program of studies to ensure the goals of education are achieved. Once the program is clearly defined, decisions about resource allocation and achievement monitoring can follow.

What do students need to know, be like, and be able to do?		
Fundamental Skills	Personal Management Skills	Teamwork Skills
✓ Communicate	✓ Demonstrate Positive Attitudes and Behaviours	-Work With Others
✓ Manage Information	✓ Be Responsible	-Participate in Projects and Tasks
✓ Use Numbers	✓ Be Adaptable	
✓ Think and Solve Problems	✓ Learn Continuously	
	✓ Work Safely	

Recommended Resource: For more information about education finance, review Module 7 – *Trustee Education and Board Development*. It can be found on the SSBA website.

The Goals of Education recognize the inherent worth and value of each individual. Education, then, should develop the potential of each person to the fullest extent. It should also enhance the ability of each individual to cope effectively in a changing physical, economic and social environment.

Basic Skills

- Read, write and compute
- Acquire information and meaning through observing, listening, reading and experiencing
- Process information through intellectual and technological means
- Solve problems by applying basic principles and processes of the sciences, arts and humanities
- Communicate ideas through written and spoken language, mathematical symbols and aesthetic expression

Life-Long Learning

- Seek and value learning experiences
- Act as self-reliant learners
- Base actions on the knowledge that it is necessary to learn throughout life

Understanding and Relating to Others

- Act on the belief that each individual is worthwhile
- Base actions on the recognition that people differ in their values, behaviours and lifestyles
- Interact and feel comfortable with others who are different in race, religion, status or personal attributes
- Develop a sense of responsibility toward others

Career and Consumer Decisions

- Develop an awareness of career opportunities
- Develop interests and abilities in relation to vocational expectations
- Adapt to shifts in employment patterns and technology
- Make informed consumer decisions

Growing with Change

- Work toward immediate and long-term goals
- Base actions on an understanding that change is a natural process in society
- Select workable alternatives in response to changing conditions
- Develop confidence in making decisions that involve risk

Membership in Society

- Assume responsibility for their own actions
- Work with others to achieve individual and group goals
- Participate in the democratic processes of government and perform the duties of citizenship
- Respect the rights and property of others
- Act with honesty, integrity, compassion and fairness
- Develop a sense of national pride and acknowledge the need for international understanding
- Work toward greater social justice
- Assume responsibility for dependent persons in a manner consistent with their needs
- Respect law and authority
- Exercise the right of dissent responsibly

Self-Concept Development

- Perceive themselves in a positive way
- Appreciate their own abilities and limitations
- Set and work toward personal goals
- Assess praise and criticism realistically
- Present themselves with confidence

Positive Lifestyle

- Practise appropriate personal hygiene, engage in sufficient physical activity, and maintain a nutritionally balanced diet
- Avoid harmful use of alcohol and other drugs
- Cultivate interests that may be the basis for personal development and leisure pursuits
- Recognize the importance of productive activity
- Display initiative and pursue tasks diligently
- Maintain a safe and healthful community
- Respect and seek to enhance the environment
- Appreciate beauty in its many natural and constructed forms
- Express themselves creatively

Spiritual Development

- Seek an understanding of the purpose and worth of human existence
- Develop a knowledge of God
- Respect family, religion and culture in a pluralistic society

The Way Things Work with School^{PLUS}

School^{PLUS}, a 2002 government policy initiative to improve the well being, educational outcomes and success for all Saskatchewan children in learning and in life significantly, affects the way things work in Saskatchewan education:

- It extends the definition of schooling and changes how school systems, boards of education and schools are to respond to the educational and developmental needs of children and young people in the province.
- It focuses on keeping children in schools that are safe and supportive environments, on reaching out to the Aboriginal community to assure success of Aboriginal children, and on reaching out to those who have left school.
- It mandates involvement of the community in directing the school division and in having the school division participate in development of the community.
- It calls for participative decision-making with greater involvement of district boards, School Community Councils, staff and community organizations.

Seven government departments, including the Ministry of Education, work collaboratively to provide coordinated support services to children at school so that teachers can focus on teaching and learning.

What is new in this initiative is the responsibility of boards of education to move beyond achievement in school to include responsibility for the well-being and success in life of students. In School^{PLUS} all schools have a Community School philosophy where the school is the centre of services that support all children in the community. All schools and the school division include students, parents and the greater community in making decisions that will affect student outcomes.

While the school board responsibility of achieving positive results in the education of students remains unchanged, School^{PLUS} places a greater responsibility on the work of school divisions:

- To provide inclusive and adaptive leadership within an ever-changing context;
- To use policy and monitoring of results as key governing tools; and,
- To develop new partnerships in supporting children.

For more information visit www.education.gov.sk.ca/SchoolPLUS.

Indicators of Effective Practice

The Goals of Education for Saskatchewan provide a vision for the whole province. Most boards of education also develop a statement of vision, mission, and core values. These policy statements are part of defining what success looks like for the school division.

The effectiveness and success of a board of education is determined by the extent to which it is moving toward greater realization of the Goals of Education and its own vision statement. Elements such as busing, school maintenance and staffing are not ends in themselves, but rather means by which a vision of excellence and the Goals of Education can be achieved.

One of the best ways that a board of education can evaluate its effectiveness is to establish measurable goals relating to student achievement, retention of students until completion of Grade 12, and a safe, orderly school environment that relate to the Goals of Education. A significant role of the board is to review monitoring reports on a regular basis to assess progress and report progress to students, parents and the community.

Recommended Resources: For more information about monitoring effectiveness, review the following modules on the SSBA website:

- Module 6 – *Board-CEO Relationship*;
- Module 7 – *School Program and Achievement*; and
- Module 9 – *Successful Schools*.

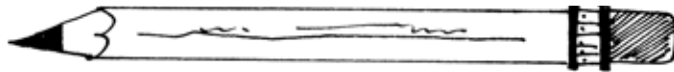
“Every community expects that their board of education will ensure that resources are used efficiently, that all schools operate effectively and that a safe environment for learning is maintained. In the past, the work of boards was focused primarily on overseeing and managing these inputs. Today, boards of education are also called upon to focus on results - ensure that students are achieving at the desired level.”

Good governance requires boards of education to:

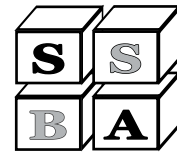
- Provide leadership in developing plans that think creatively about the future of education in the school system;
- Demonstrate responsible stewardship through effective application of policy governance; and,
- Establish productive and successful relationships for the school system.



Notes



Building Board Knowledge



By invitation, SSBA staff facilitate workshops with boards of education to develop effective approaches for good governance.

Some initial questions include:

- 1. How many students and teachers are there in individual schools in your school division?*

- 2. How does the board ensure public and staff are engaged in decisions about the school system? What are the duties and responsibilities of the school community councils? Is effective engagement monitored systematically or informally?*

- 3. How are program decisions made by your board of education?*

- 4. Does your board of education have written three-year strategic plans or goals?*

- 5. How will the board measure progress to determine whether the goals are being achieved?*

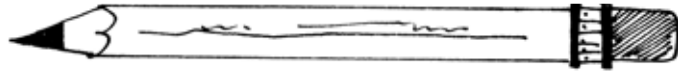
Educational Organizations

Saskatchewan's major educational organizations are described in this section. Each of these organizations has its own mandate, programs and services, and the organizations often cooperate to achieve common goals.

The SSBA and the following organizations are described in this section:

- League of Education Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS);
- Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO);
- Ministry of Education;
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF); and,
- Teacher Pre-Service Training Institutes.

Notes



League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)

The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS) is a professional association of educational administrators who work at the school division level.

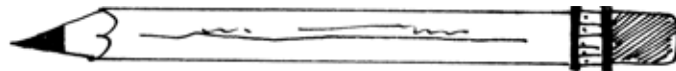
Membership

All individuals who are employed by a board of education in a supervisory or administrative capacity and have an out-of-scope designation are required to be members of LEADS. Members include directors, assistant directors, superintendents, assistant superintendents and other similar positions. Regional directors of education employed by Saskatchewan Education are also required to be members of LEADS.

LEADS specifies that its members must have certain training and experience and must meet other criteria. LEADS also:

- Provides professional development for its members such as a compulsory summer short course;
- Offers networking opportunities to its members and represents its members' interests in various forums;
- Administers the disciplinary powers that are an integral part of the legislation that created LEADS

Notes



Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO)

Secretary-treasurers and certain administrators employed by school divisions are required to be members of SASBO. SASBO provides professional development and networking opportunities for its members.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is the provincial department responsible for K-12 education. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring the quality of education in Saskatchewan. Key activities include:

- Developing curricula for all grade levels;
- Providing in-service to support curricula;
- Approving and recommending textbooks and resource material for use in the schools;
- Certifying teachers;
- Supervising independent schools and home-based education;
- Providing for teacher education;
- Administering legislation relating to education;
- Providing provincial grants to school divisions; and,
- Maintaining student records.

In addition to these responsibilities which are defined in *The Education Act, 1995*, the Ministry of Education also provides leadership in several other areas. For example, it regularly conducts province-wide student and program evaluations.

The Ministry of Education is responsible to the Minister of Education. A deputy minister, associate deputy minister and several executive directors administer the department. The Ministry head office is located in Regina. There are regional offices located in Regina, Saskatoon, and La Ronge.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)

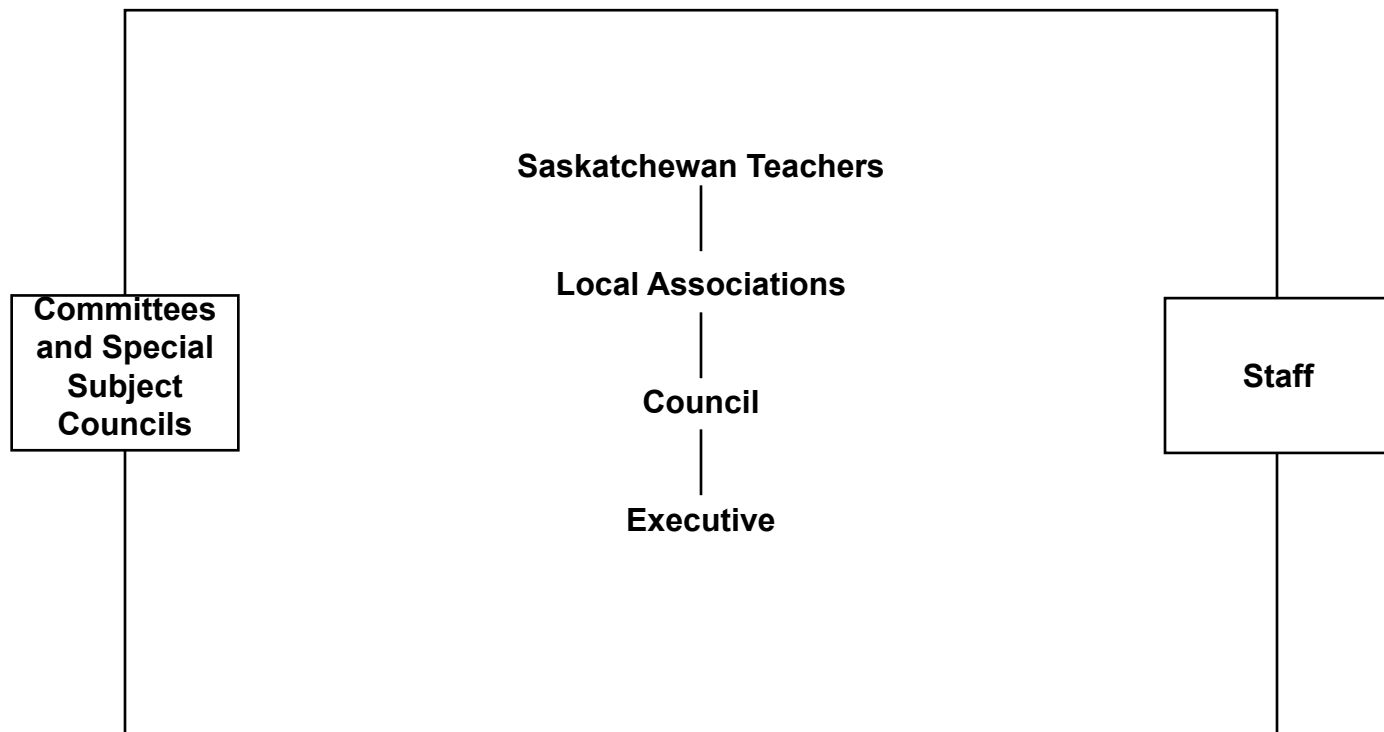
The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) is a professional organization that serves and represents teachers. Teachers must belong to the STF as a condition of employment.

The structure of the STF follows the general pattern of government in Saskatchewan. Teachers in constituencies (local associations) select representatives who form a teachers' parliament (Council), which is the major policy-making body of the federation. A cabinet (Executive) presides over the affairs of the organization and a full-time staff implements policy decisions.

The STF offers its members a wide range of comprehensive services including teacher welfare and professional development services.

The Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation is a member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). The CTF is a national organization comprised of provincial teachers' associations. It provides a national voice for teachers.

Figure 3: Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation



Source: Adapted from Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation website (www.stf.sk.ca).

Teacher Pre-Service Training

The University of Regina, Faculty of Education, and the University of Saskatchewan, College of Education, both offer comprehensive teacher education programs. At both institutions, prospective teachers can study K-12 or adult education and can choose from a wide range of specializations. Both universities offer graduate programs leading to Masters' and Doctoral degrees in education. Both accommodate full-time and part-time students and both have extensive summer school programs for teachers who wish to advance their studies during the summer.

Saskatchewan has three Teacher Education Programs (TEPs). All three of these programs prepare Aboriginal teachers as most of the prospective teachers enrolled in TEPs are of Aboriginal ancestry:

- The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) is a fully-accredited four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Education degree. It is offered through the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research in cooperation with Saskatchewan Education, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The program is offered in three urban centres – Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.
- The Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) is located in La Ronge NORTEP is sponsored by the Board of Governors which consists of 17 elected northern officials representing the NORTEP Council Inc., the Prince Albert Grand Council, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the Creighton, Ile-a-la-Crosse and Northern Lights School Divisions. NORTEP classes are offered under the aegis of, and in cooperation with, the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina.
- The Indian Teacher Program (ITEP) is a program of the University of Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), in cooperation with the University of Regina, also offers a four-year Bachelor of Education program and a two-year Bachelor of Education after-degree program.

The Board of Teacher Education and Certification sets out the requirements for education and certification of teachers in Saskatchewan. All teacher education programs must meet the requirements of this Board in order for its graduates to be eligible for certification.

Saskatchewan School Boards Association

Overview

The SSBA is a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in public education by providing leadership and services to Saskatchewan school boards. The Association represents all school boards in Saskatchewan.

<p>Mission: <i>“To serve boards of education as the voice of publicly-funded education in Saskatchewan.”</i></p> <p>Vision: <i>“The Voice for Publicly-Funded Education.”</i></p>

School boards are elected to govern K-12 education in their school divisions and so are essential members of local government. They ensure that the wishes of the community are reflected in the community’s schools and make decisions that shape the education of Saskatchewan’s children. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association supports boards in their very important role.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association has served boards of education since 1915. It was founded in that year under its previous name – the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association was incorporated by a special act of the legislature in 1952.

The current governance structure gives school boards multiple pathways for representation. The Provincial Executive of the Association consists of a President, Vice-President and 7 representatives. Seven constituencies are represented to include the following groups: the Catholic Section, Urban Public Boards, Conseil Scolaire Fransaskois, Aboriginal, and south, central and northern boards.

Provincial Executive members are the Board of the Association and act as advocates for education, addressing local and provincial issues, and also represent the Association on various inter-organizational committees involved in education.

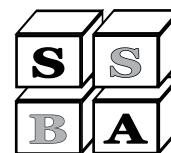
Advocacy, board member development and member services are the major activities of Association.

Time is spent working with the government and opposition members of the legislative assembly, senior officials, other local governments, partners in education, agencies and bodies who can or do have an impact on school boards and publicly-funded education in Saskatchewan. A large portion of the Association’s work is representative in nature and reflects the desire of boards of education to have the Association act as an advocate for boards of education in the service of children.

Recommended Resource: For more information about your Association, review the *Handbook for School Board Members 2009 – 2012*.

Building Board Knowledge

1. *What are some of the SSBA services used by your school division?*



National Affiliations

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association is a member of the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA). The CSBA is the national voice of provincial associations of boards of education and school board members. It is composed of ten provincial board of education associations.

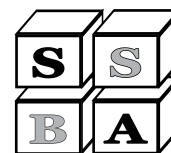
CSBA's mandate includes promoting educational excellence, maintaining a national profile for boards of education, providing leadership in issues with national implications, and fostering the maintenance of the principles of local autonomy in education.

The Catholic Section of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association is a member of the Canadian Catholic School Trustees Association (CCSTA). CCSTA is comprised of Catholic school trustee associations and Catholic boards of education from across Canada. Its mandate is to promote excellence in Catholic education throughout Canada. Its activities include advocating for Catholic education, and professional development for its members.

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Building Board Knowledge



- 1. Can you think of some examples of situations where your board of education has cooperated with the other education partners for the benefit of students?*

Trusteeship

Roles and Responsibilities

The duties and powers of boards of education and CEF are described in Sections 85 to 88 of *The Education Act, 1995*.

These sections provide detailed listings of items that boards are responsible for. Ultimately, however, boards of education are responsible not for buildings, bargaining, budgets or buses, but for results.

Boards of education are responsible for realizing the Goals of Education, for ensuring that children in their community stay in school and achieve at high levels. They are responsible for ensuring that local schools reflect the community's values and expectations. The many duties and powers listed in The Education Act, 1995 are means to these ends.

Many aspects of the education system are in the provincial sphere and beyond the direct control of boards of education. These include teacher salaries and benefits, teacher certification, some elements of the school program, and occupational health and safety regulations.

In addition, boards of education are influenced by national and international trends and pressures in education.

Boards of education do have a mandate for many aspects of education, however. These include the organizational culture of the school division, the quality of the teachers and principals they hire, some aspects of the instructional program, and issues that are bargained locally such as sabbatical and educational leave for teachers. By directing their energies into those elements they can control, boards can help ensure success for all students.

Boards of education govern by creating policies and setting goals and then holding directors of education, principals and other staff responsible for implementing policies and achieving goals. Boards of education don't become involved in the day-to-day elements of school operations such as supervision of teachers or support staff, ordering equipment and supplies, or establishing timetables and schedules. All of these tasks are the job of paid staff.

Most importantly, school trustees are elected members of boards of education and play a very important role in their communities.

Trusteeship is Essential

Saskatchewan is a diverse province. Communities differ one from the other and within communities there are often differing values and opinions. School board members ensure that the values of their community are reflected in the community's schools. Board members identify the needs and wants of their community and translate those needs and wants into practical educational opportunities for children. This is no simple task as board members must mediate among conflicting interests and values. However, it is an essential task – there is no better way to realize our democratic heritage.

Trusteeship is the First Level of Democratic Government

School board members are democratically elected and are responsible to their communities for the decisions they make.

Trusteeship is Learning and Making a Contribution

Trustees contribute to their communities by serving as community leaders and ensuring that children have high quality education. Most board members are learning even as they are making a contribution. They learn more about their communities and the education system, and they develop new skills that are useful in both their personal and professional lives.

Trusteeship is Valued

The work that trustees do is respected and highly valued. Parents and the public rely on board members to act on their behalf, to express their hopes and aspirations and to ensure that their children are well-educated and properly cared for.

Trustees are Members of a Team

Individual board members are members of a team – the board of education. Only the team has authority. Individual board members cannot make decisions or take action on behalf of the school division. Only the board of education can act.

Getting Off to a Good Start

The board of education is responsible for overseeing the operation of the school division. Having this responsibility does not mean that board members have to know how to teach school, administer a building, or develop a curriculum.

It does mean that each board member must carefully read material on a variety of subjects prepared by the staff, draw preliminary conclusions from the reading, and be ready to ask clarifying questions during board meeting discussions before voting on each agenda item. It does mean that the board must be prepared to articulate the vision, mission and goals that will guide the work of the school division staff.

Your Association has developed a program for board member education and board development to support your board work. The *Handbook for School Board Members 2009 – 2012* provides a summary of these key ideas. The following suggestions will also be helpful.

Be Prepared

Prepare for board meetings by reading all the materials before the meeting. In some cases, the material will contain information and educational terms unfamiliar to you. When this happens, keep a note pad on hand and jot down questions when they come up. Once you've read all the materials contact either the board chair or the director to discuss your questions. When topics come up for discussion at the board meeting, jot down additional questions that are not answered to your satisfaction and ask questions before voting. Listen to and get involved in the discussions and keep asking questions until you understand the issue.

Know Your Policy

Review board policies and the administrative procedures used in the division. Don't expect to read everything in one sitting but refer to these as questions or concerns arise. Take notes about particular areas needing clarification or which are of concern to you. Discuss these questions and concerns with the director to get his/her perspective. As board and division operations become more familiar, it may become apparent that some policies need to be changed or clarified. Find out when the board reviews policies and what the process is for revisions.

You And The Director of Education

Building a mutually supportive relationship between the board and director is essential for a successful and effective school system. If the working relationship between the board and the administration is not good, the entire division will suffer and the educational program will not be a priority. If there is a general lack of support of the director, the director deserves fair treatment, honest and open evaluations, and a chance to improve the situation. Board members who want to change administrators and hope that the perfect director will apply will probably be disappointed. The board, not the individual members, needs to give direction to the administration about what it wants done.

Personal Agendas

Everyone has “personal agendas.” However, personal agendas that waste board time and interfere with the division’s operation can be a problem. New board members need to be honest about their concerns, but it should not be a surprise if the rest of the board will not support these concerns at the very first meeting. In most cases, new members will find it wise to wait a few months before beginning any campaigns to change things. Board members who are patient, who thoroughly study the issues and who support their arguments with convincing evidence may succeed in turning campaign issues into board issues sometime during their first term.

It’s The Law

Conduct legal board meetings. The board meeting is where the board accomplishes its work. Meetings must be public, approve motions and maintain appropriate minutes. Ask your director or Association staff for ideas about working within the law.

Listen

Handle complaints professionally. Be prepared to hear a lot of opinions and problems from the public. Being familiar with board policy and procedure will help to answer specific questions, but many complaints from the public will be difficult to handle. The best advice is to listen and thank the person for calling. Encourage the person to talk to the division employee who can help them with the problem. Resist the urge to promise that “something will be done.”

You Can Make A Difference

People run for office because they want to make a difference and can become overwhelmed by all the restrictions placed on a school division. Take the time to learn about the division. Be patient, persistent and keep in mind that the public has entrusted you, together with your fellow board members, the responsibility to ensure that each child in your division is served.

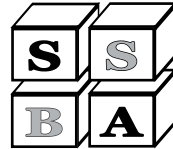
Expectations

School board members are expected to be honest and sincere, to make decisions that are in the best interests of students, to avoid conflicts of interest and to attend meetings regularly.

Boards of education are expected to adopt a code of ethics and expect all members to adhere to the code.

Some boards also develop norms or a code of conduct for how they will do business.

Building Board Knowledge



In your own words, write down how your pledge of behaviour as a board member. Encourage the board to discuss ethics and conduct periodically to build positive and productive relationships.

1. As a member of the board of education, I pledge to:

2. As a member of the educational community, I pledge to:

Dear Colleague:

Congratulations on your election to the board of education! Welcome!

Three years ago when I joined the board, the Chairperson, a man for whom I have a great deal of respect reacted to my statement that “I am not a politician, just a parent”.

His response to me was “If you want to make a difference you must understand how the political system works because, like it or not, the moment you were elected you became a politician”.

Two years later I helped run a campaign for a cause that was good for kids and that I strongly believed in. I stood up at meetings, we canvassed with fliers, called on the phone, prompted elected officials to support our cause and held fundraisers. If this is not politics, I do not know what is!

I said once before, “educational change takes place in a political arena”.

Someone once told me that their definition of politics was “The art of the possible.”

As school board members, our job is to determine what is best for children and then do what is necessary to make it “possible”.

A certain amount of “politicking” is necessary to succeed in our jobs. I think what people really object to is not politics, but partisan politics. Partisan politics frequently places the power of a small group of people above the quality of the decision. That kind of thinking can certainly be damaging to our schools. Staying focused on what is best for children will usually produce the right decision.’

Best wishes!

A Fellow School Board Trustee

Annual Fall General Assembly

Fall General Assembly is the annual general meeting of the SSBA. As this is the largest annual SSBA event, workshops and celebrations are tagged on to the days before and after the business meeting.

Relationships

An important component of Fall General Assembly is spending time with members of your board, other board members and SSBA staff to build relationships. The meals and coffee breaks are as important as the structured sessions.

Exchange Ideas

Sharing good ideas is an important component of getting to know others in the education community. Opportunities for networking are built into the Fall General Assembly so take notes.

Bylaws

The rules that govern the operation of the Association are defined as bylaws (i.e.: membership, membership fees, representation on the Executive, organization of the Association and rules for the Fall General Assembly). Changing a bylaw requires a 2/3 majority of the votes cast.

Resolutions

A package of resolutions for consideration at Fall General Assembly is circulated prior to the event. Information is included with the resolution to indicate whether the proposal supports or changes existing Association policy. Most boards discuss resolutions prior to Fall General Assembly. Guidelines are in place that permit a group of board members to draft a new resolution at Fall General Assembly.

Voting

Resolutions are an important aspect of the business meeting. Since there are more than 250 voting delegates, Robert's Rules of Order are used to ensure fair process. Boards are assigned ballots based on the number of students in the school division.

Presentations

Be prepared for interesting and engaging presentations as part of the board member education component of the Fall General Assembly.

Acronyms

Are all those abbreviations a mystery to you? This guide will help.

- **B.Ed.** – Bachelor of Education degree.
- **CCSTA** – Canadian Catholic School Trustees’ Association – A national organization comprised of Catholic school trustee groups and boards of education. www.ccsta.ca
- **CSBA** – Canadian School Boards Association – A national organization comprised of ten provincial board of education associations. www.cdnsba.org
- **CTF** – Canadian Teachers’ Federation – A national organization comprised of provincial teachers’ associations. www.ctf-fce.ca
- **GDI** – Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research – The educational arm of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Programs offered include the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). www.gdins.org
- **ITEP** – Indian Teacher Education Program – A program offered by the University of Saskatchewan. www.usask.ca
- **K-12** – Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- **LEADS** – League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan – An organization comprised of directors, regional directors, assistant directors, superintendents and assistant superintendents of education. www.sasbo.com.LEADS.html
- **MACH** – Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing – The provincial government department that administers programs and legislation relevant to municipal government. www.municipal.gov.sk.ca
- **NORTEP** – Northern Teacher Education Program – A program that primarily educates Aboriginal teachers – located in La Ronge. www.rongenet.sk.ca
- **PSEST** – Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training – The provincial government department responsible for post-secondary education and training. www.sasked.gov.sk.ca
- **SARM** – Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities – An organization that represents the interests of rural municipalities in Saskatchewan. www.quantumlynx.com/sarm/

- **SASBO** – Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials – SASBO – Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials – A membership organization, established as a non-profit corporation, comprised of chief financial officers, other business officials and superintendents such as HR and facilities who are not members of LEADS. www.sasbo.com
- **SASC** – Saskatchewan Association of School Councils – A volunteer organization that represents parents’ groups such as home and school groups and school councils. www.schoolcouncils.sk.ca
- **Ministry of Education** – The provincial government department responsible for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. www.sasked.gov.sk.ca
- **SIAST** – Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology – A provincial institution that provides career-related training – located in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon. www.siastr.sk.ca
- **SIFC** – Saskatchewan Indian Federated College – A First Nations-controlled post-secondary college affiliated with the University of Regina. www.sifc.edu
- **SIIT** – Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies – An Indian-controlled regional college that offers programs in areas such as business administration, community health and office education.
- **STF** – Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation – A professional organization that serves and represents Saskatchewan’s Kindergarten to Grade 12 educators. www.stf.sk.ca
- **SUMA** – Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association – An organization that represents the interests of urban municipalities in Saskatchewan. www.suma.org
- **SUNTEP** – Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program – A teacher education program offered through the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research. www.gdins.org
- **U of R** – University of Regina – Located in Regina. www.uregina.ca
- **U of S** – University of Saskatchewan – Located in Saskatoon. www.usask.ca

Reflection

True or False

T or F	1. Boards of education are accountable for ensuring an appropriate education for every child between ages 6 and 21, inclusive.
T or F	2. LEADS is the organization that represents the interests of teachers.
T or F	3. Saskatchewan has several special university programs dedicated to Aboriginal teacher education.
T or F	4. The authority of school board members is established in law.
T or F	5. SSBA staff are not only handsome but humble.

Short Answer

1. What is the basis for board of education authority?

2. Describe your board of education with reference to the type of board, the makeup of key stakeholders and the power relationships (use proper terminology).

3. What are the total annual expenditures and sources of revenue for your board of education (round figures to the nearest dollar value)?

4. What does a quality education require students know, be like and be able to do? Describe in your own words and explain the relationship to the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan.

5. What are the key measures of school board accountability and effectiveness?

Why did I become a board member? What do I want to achieve during this term of office?

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I want to learn more about:

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Who can I involve in addressing my interests and concerns?

Where do I begin? When do I begin?

	Ideas I Want to Learn More About	Ideas for My Board
To Be an Effective Trustee		
To Be an Effective Board of Education		
Organization of the Saskatchewan Education System		



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