

The Board of Trustees is dedicated to serving the educational needs and aspirations of the people within the Swan Valley School Division. The Board is elected to “guard the public trust” in matters of education and does so primarily through policies, which guide the daily activities of the schools and the school division. Policies are principles adopted by the Board to set the course of action for the division. They are broad guidelines intended to provide clear direction, and to set ethical parameters around how policy goals are to be achieved. The role of the Board in the policy cycle is to determine the need for policy, to ensure that policy is developed, and that policy is followed. The role of the Administration is to execute policy within the spirit and intent written by the Board.

In addition:

- All edicts of the province of Manitoba, (including regulations) are considered mandated Board policy.
- All agreements signed through contract are considered mandated Board policy, such as the collective agreements signed with employee groups.
- All adopted rules and regulations concerning the Board’s own procedures and how the Board operates as the governance arm of the school division are found in the Board’s By-Laws.

This Board Policy Manual is supplemented by the Manual of Administrative Procedures, the principal written document by which the Superintendent/CEO directs the operation of the school division and the staff. The Manual of Administrative Procedures must be entirely consistent with the Board Policy Manual. The policies within this document reflect the requirements of the Board, and reflect provincial legislation and priorities, as outlined in the legislation and regulations governing education, including The Public Schools Act, The Education Administration Act, The Safe Schools Charter, The Workplace Safety and Health Act, The Manitoba Human Rights Code, The Child and Family Services Act, Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), and the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). Compliance with federal legislation including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Youth Criminal Justice Act and The Constitution Act are also reflected within the policies and procedure of Swan Valley School Division.

The development of two distinct documents reinforces the distinction between the governance responsibility of the Board and the administrative/managerial duties of the Superintendent/CEO within the Board’s Strategic Governance Model.

Board Governance

The Board leads the Division as a unified body, encouraging and strengthening the entire Division to achieve exciting and unprecedented results for students. The primary activity of the Board is governance, which means that in its leadership capacity, the Board guides the achievements of the school division by making high level decisions, setting broad goals, and ensuring that the Board's policy manual is current, relevant, and complied with. Therefore, Trustees do not run the school division; they are governors, not 'bosses.' The Board contribution is vital in its power and leadership, and the role of the individual Trustee is to learn to govern with excellence.

The Role of an Elected School Board

School Boards are responsible, by law, for the delivery of fair and equitable public education within their jurisdiction. As the governing Board, the Trustees are responsible to:

- Identify, express, and represent values, which reflect the best hopes and aspirations of the community.
- Choose and organize priorities and outcomes for the School Division.
- Establish structures and systems, and retain a Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer for the school division.
- Acquire and allocate resources.
- Set out vital principles and the limits of acceptable behaviour.
- Encourage commitment and compliance within the school division.
- Evaluate performance of themselves, the Superintendent/CEO, and the school division.
- Move the organization forward according to established decisions and standards.

Policy Leadership as Strategic Governance

Through governance policy statement (The Board Policy Manual) the Board provides leadership for the Division. According to The Public Schools Act, only the Board can adopt new policies or revise existing policies. In Swan Valley, this is accomplished through policy leadership in order to ensure the pursuit of excellence within the Division.

Strategic governance is practiced by the Board. This informs the Board's governance role and strengthens the connection between the Board and the community it is elected to represent. Policies are clearly worded and re-examined regularly by the Board to ensure that desired results are being achieved within the Division. Accountability is clearly established through the delegation of authority to the Superintendent/CEO in written Board policy. A regular monitoring cycle for Board policies ensures the necessary framework for Administration to demonstrate achievement of the goals

established by the Board and holds the Superintendent/CEO accountable for compliance with Board policies.

Strong governance policies:

- Illustrate the relationship between core values and the actions of the school division.
- Eliminate overlapping policies.
- Provide easy maintenance.
- Offer assurance of compliance.
- Set a clear framework for operations within the school division.
- Clarify accountability.

School boards develop four types of policy:

- Specified results the Board wants to achieve.
- Defined authority and responsibility.
- The processes and operations of the Board itself.
- How the Board is connected to the management of the school division.

Administrative procedures are the delegated responsibility of the Superintendent/CEO and may be developed, altered and monitored without prior approval of the board, except in those areas specifically identified through Board policy as requiring Board approval (see Policies 13 and 15).

Policies are developed depending on responses to the following three questions:

1. Does this policy communicate clearly the purposes of the Board?
2. Does this policy define the Board's instructions to the Superintendent/CEO in such a way as to allow the Superintendent/CEO an acceptable range of implementation?
3. How will this policy be monitored?

By practicing strategic governance, the Board ensures that the policy is the basis for action and decision making within the school division.