



# An Introduction to the Surrey Board of Education

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## The Role of Trustees

For more than a century, the Surrey Board of Education has been providing services for families in Surrey and White Rock. Today, the Board administers 125 elementary and secondary schools. With an enrolment in excess of 66,000 students, Surrey School District is the largest of 60 school districts in British Columbia and is expected to continue to grow.

Making educational and operational policy decisions about such a large school system requires effective leadership at the local level. The Surrey Board of Education comprises seven members of the community who have been elected to make decisions to ensure the best possible delivery of educational services to our learners, while making certain tax payers' dollars are spent wisely. Each December, the Board conducts an election for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the coming year at a regular board meeting. A trustee may not hold the office of Chairperson for more than two consecutive terms of office.

The main tasks of the school trustees are:

- determine educational goals and priorities,
- set district budgets according to those goals and priorities,
- establish policies,
- plan for the future of the district,
- communicate with the people of Surrey and White Rock about educational matters.

## The Role of District Administration

Day-to-day management of the school district is a major task. The Board of Education employs a team of skilled professionals and support staff to carry out this administrative responsibility under the leadership of the Superintendent of Schools. In the capacity of Chief Executive Officer, the Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the school district's operations.

With more than 130 schools and district offices and 8,000 employees, the school district is Surrey's biggest business and largest employer. Effective management of the district's financial and business affairs is the responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer.

The Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary-Treasurer sit with the trustees at Board meetings. They and other senior members of Administration may be called up to assist the board during meetings.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

(December 2008 – November 2011)



Laurae McNally  
Chairperson



Shawn Wilson  
Vice Chairperson



Terry Allen, Trustee



Ijaz Chatha, Trustee



Pam Glass, Trustee



Laurie Larsen, Trustee



Reni Masi, Trustee

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Mike McKay  
Superintendent



Peter Drescher  
Deputy  
Superintendent



Wayne Noye  
Secretary-  
Treasurer



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## Accountability to the Community

The Board of Education for the Surrey School District has been created under the “*School Act*”. Within the limitations of the “*Act*”, trustees are empowered to determine local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the district.

School boards have been established in the belief that local people are in the best position to make decisions appropriate to the educational needs of their community. To this end, your trustees have been elected by the people of Surrey and White Rock to make educational decisions on their behalf.

In doing so, the trustees must act as a Board, rather than as individuals. Only the Board as a whole may make decisions - the Chairperson, committees of the Board, or individual trustees cannot make decisions independently.

Actions requiring decisions by the Board are debated according to the rules of parliamentary procedures, then voted upon by the trustees. Board meetings are conducted in accordance with “*Robert’s Rules of Order*”.

## Regular Board Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Education are open to the public and are usually held twice each month, on the second and fourth Thursday. In August, the Board usually meets on the fourth Thursday and in December, on the second Thursday only. There are no Board meetings held in July. Regular Board meetings commence at 7:30 p.m. and are held in the City of Surrey council chambers in Surrey City Hall, at 14245–56 Avenue.

## Special Board Meetings

Special Board meetings may be called from time-to-time to deal with emergent issues. These meetings are held at the call of the Chairperson.

The Board also meets “*in-camera*” prior to or following every regular Board meeting to deal with items pertaining to personnel, property or litigious matters. In the interest of preserving confidentiality in such matters, all persons other than Board members and officers are excluded from attending in-camera meetings.

## Communicating with your Board of Education

Your Board of Education believes good two-way communication with the community is necessary if trustees are to offer the sound educational leadership and effective financial management they have been elected to provide. Parents and other members of the community are always welcome to attend regular Board meetings.

Through formal delegations or through the question period following each Board meeting, members of the public have an opportunity to communicate with the Board about district programs and services. Attending Board meetings is not only a way to hear what your trustees have to say, it is a chance to have your own voice heard in the operation of the Surrey School District.

## Question Period

A question period is held following each regular meeting at which time members of the audience may direct questions to the Board. Such enquiries should pertain to the Board’s policies or activities.

Questions are to be written on the form provided at each meeting and submitted to the Board during the question period.

## Delegations / Presentations

Persons or groups who wish to make a presentation to the Board should contact the Secretary-Treasurer, either in writing or by telephone, outlining the matter to be presented and giving the name of the spokesperson at least one week prior to the meeting at which they wish to be heard.

Presentations should be brief; about five minutes.

Delegations are allotted a total of 15 minutes, to permit questions from the Board members.

If a written brief is to be presented, the delegation should ensure it is provided to the Secretary-Treasurer at least one week before the meeting so it may be included in the agenda material forwarded to trustees in advance of each meeting.

Delegations are encouraged to discuss their topic freely; however, personal accusations and criticisms will be considered out of order.

Depending upon the complexity of the issue, the Board generally responds to matters raised by delegations at the next regular meeting.