



School District 54
(Bulkley Valley)

TRUSTEE HANDBOOK

September 2022

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BOARD VALUES

Ethical Decision Making based on:

HONESTY
FAIRNESS
RESPECT
RESPONSIBILITY
COMPASSION

SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 1933 Student FTEs (full time equivalents)
- Includes Smithers, Witset, Telkwa, Quick and Houston
- 7 Schools + Alternate School (BVLC) @ Coast Mountain College+ BV Education Connection (BVEC)
- Two Secondary (8-12); three K-7 Elementary, one K-3 Primary, one 4-7 Intermediate
- Other facilities: SBO, Learner Resource Centre, Maintenance
- Approximate employees:
 - 116 Teachers (FTE)
 - 110 CUPE Education Support staff (FTE)
 - 14 Administrators
 - 11 Excluded staff

REPRESENTATION

		Trustee Representation
Zone 1	Lake Kathlyn / Evelyn / Witset	1
Zone 2	Smithers / Glentanna / Driftwood	3
Zone 3	Telkwa / Quick	1
Zone 4	Houston	2

The Board member should:

- Accept his/her share of public appearances on behalf of the Board;
- When representing the Board, present the Board's view and not his/her own;
- Promote interest in, and support for, the Board of Education and the public schools.

[Policy 1.100 Trustee Representation](#)

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY

Boards of Education Co-govern school districts with the provincial government.

BC Ministry of education sets curriculum, funding and legal framework for K-12 education

Boards are responsible for governing school districts based on the educational aspirations of their local communities and in accordance with the policy direction established by government.

The [BC School Act](#) outlines the role of trustees and boards of education, including:

- Attending board meetings
- Setting school district policy
- Employing Superintendent
- Establishing school district's strategic direction, vision and goals
- Overseeing school district finances capital plans
- Hearing appeals relating to a student's education, health or safety

GOVERNANCE

The members of the Boards of Education of each School District are elected by the residents to govern its public education in a progressive, farsighted, educationally-sound and economically-feasible manner. But in so doing, the Board must abide by the provisions of the *School Act* and its regulations.

Board Authority is governed by:



- Province of BC Legislation
- Ministry of Education School Act
- Bylaws
- Policies & Regulations
- Administrative Procedures
- Roberts Rules of Order

The Corporate Board

A board of education has the authority to make decisions or to take action through resolutions or bylaw of the board as a whole, and not individual trustees or committees. Under the School Act, a trustee's power lies in membership on a corporate school board. Trustees on a board will debate ideas and vote on a final decision. Once the board has voted, a trustee must uphold the decision.

A Board of Education has no powers other than those granted to it by the *School Act* and other statutes which may apply. The [School Act s.85](#) states that the

Board “shall determine local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district”.

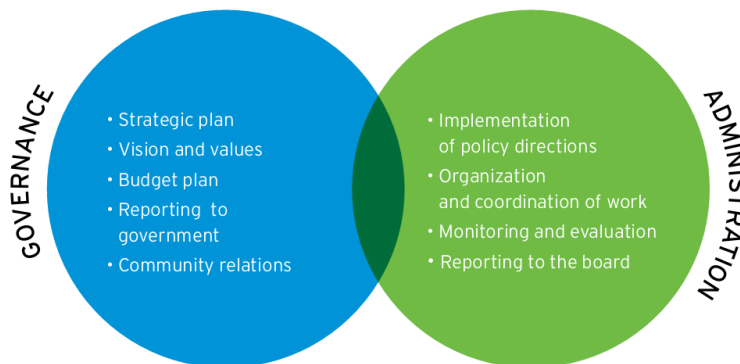
The Board has the authority to appoint and dismiss teachers and other employees as necessary for the efficient operation of the public schools of the District. ([School Act s.15](#))

The term ‘*corporate board*’ is used frequently. That term defines legal status; it does not define governance processes. A Board member has no rights, powers, or duties as an individual under the *School Act*. These prerogatives and responsibilities rest only with the legally constituted board.

Boards Represent the Employer

As employers, school districts have a legal responsibility for oversight of their management, teaching and support staff. For unionized staff, the terms and conditions of the relationship are established through legislation, board policy, and in collective agreements. Boards of education represent the employer in this relationship.

BC has a two-tier structure for collective bargaining through the BC Public School Employers’ Association (BCPSEA). Various unions negotiate provincial issues with BCPSEA while union locals and boards of education negotiate local issues.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Boards have an important responsibility for overseeing a school district’s financial and capital decisions. The board oversees the development of a strategic plan and the allocation of resources to support that plan, ensuring financial resources are in alignment with the district’s goals.

Trustee Expectations

- Respect governance
- Reasonable knowledge of meeting conduct, policy and legislation
- Participate, courtesy, respectful, team-minded
- Debate, discuss, question, consult, provide input
- Accept fair share of work: Committees, attendance, etc.
- Publicly present Board's view – not yours
- Promote interest, support District & ``What is best for kids``
- Best practices for handling complaints
- Positive working relationship with Superintendent

Code of Ethics

In the interest of sound, consensual decisions, the Board of Education of School District #54 (Bulkley Valley) specifically encourages the expression of individual opinions by members of the Board. For effective and efficient operations, it is important that all Trustees also adhere to the following code of ethics:

- Best practices for decision making & governance. Students first
- Proper decorum
- Participation in board decisions & acknowledge individual trustees have no legal authority
- Scope of delegated responsibility: respect Superintendent's office
- Positive working relationships
- Recognize Legal Authority: comply with legislation, bylaws & governance protocols.
- Abide by board decisions
- Maintain the confidentiality.
- Abide by conflict of interest regulations
- Constructive public relations

Confidentiality

- It is important that most Board discussions/decisions are made in the public forum,
- Many Board decisions affect real people in real ways and it may be in the public's interest to hold some meetings/discussions in private (in-camera)
- Trustees are ethically bound to maintain confidentiality,
- Breaches of confidentiality can do serious damage, result in broken trust, damaged relationships and legal consequences.

Conflict of Interest

It is the ethical and legal duty of each trustee to avoid conflict of interest in all trusteeship responsibilities. Trustees shall not use the schools or the School

District's programs for any perceived, potential or actual personal advantage or for the advantage of family and friends.

When a trustee becomes aware that he or she is in a position that creates a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest, he or she will declare the nature and extent of the conflict at a public board meeting and recuse themselves from deliberating or voting on the issue giving rise to the conflict.

You are in a conflict of interest if there could be a **reasonable public perception** that a board decision could result in a potential fiduciary, financial or personal impact on you or a person or organization you are associated with. Boards and individuals need to be vigilant in avoiding active engagement in discussion, debate, decision-making or even being privy to information.

[Policy 1.180 Code of Conduct](#)

[BCSTA: Conflict of Interest Document](#)

COMPLAINTS TO A TRUSTEE

Complaints Concerning Employees

When a trustee receives a complaint from a citizen, it is a good practice to:

1. If it concerns a teacher, the individual should be directed to discuss and resolve the matter with first, the teacher concerned, then the Principal and finally the Superintendent.
2. If the complaint is one that is not easily answered by the Trustee, it is a good practice to indicate that the concern will be investigated and an answer will be provided.
3. The Superintendent and/or Secretary Treasurer should be informed of all complaints made to Trustees.
4. When dealing with complaints, remember that there are always two sides to every story. It is wise not to commit to any opinion or course of action until all facts are known.

[Policy 4.320 Complaints Concerning Employees](#)

Complaints & Appeals Concerning a Student's Education

Under [Section 11 of the School Act](#), the *School Act* requires Boards of Education to establish an appeals process by bylaw

If a decision of an employee of the board significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student, the parent of the student or the student may, within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision, appeal that decision to the board.

The Board recognizes that whether a decision significantly affects a student's education, health or safety is a matter for individual consideration. The following will normally be considered to be matters that significantly affect a student's education, health or safety:

[Bylaw 3 Complaints and Appeals](#)

THE BOARD

Inaugural Meeting of the Board of Education

At the beginning of the four-year term, an inaugural meeting of the board shall be held as soon as possible and in any event within 30 days from the date that the new board begins its term of office.

The purpose of the inaugural meeting is:

- To swear in new and old members as trustees for the current year;
- To elect a Chairperson and such other officers as may be required; and
- To become, as soon as possible, the responsible corporate body for the school district concerned.

[Policy 1.110 Inaugural Meeting](#)

Annual Elections

The Board shall, at its regular meeting in December of each year, conduct elections for the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, BCPSEA representative, Indigenous Education Council representative and BCSTA Provincial Counsellor

[Policy 1.160 Annual Elections](#)

The Chairperson of the Board

The *School Act* provides for the election of a school board Chairperson as one of the first responsibilities of the Board of Education ([School Act s.67](#)) The duties of a Chairperson are as follows:

- To convene and preside at the board's meetings. It should be noted that the Chairperson has the responsibility to vote on all questions. Further, it should be noted that the Chairperson's authority ends with the board meeting unless he is delegated by the board to carry out specific responsibilities.
- To accept the prime responsibility for the establishment of procedure that has dignity and meaning to members of the public who may be in attendance.
- To encourage the board's attention to policy questions rather than administrative details.

- To encourage the board to develop and keep up-to-date the board's bylaws and policy file to meet the changing needs of the school system and to provide continuing direction for the administrators.
- To enlist the interest of the board members in the educational programs being offered in the public schools so that policy making at board meetings is done intelligently.
- To foster the development of good relations between the board members and the officials.
- To assume some responsibility for the orientation of new trustees. This should be done as soon as possible by introducing them to key staff members and by providing them with background material concerning the operation of the school district.
- To represent public school education in the community on many occasions. For this reason, the chairperson must be prepared to give somewhat more of his/her time than would be required of other board members.

The Chairperson should also:

- Develop with board members an acceptable climate for the transaction of board business;
- With the Secretary-Treasurer and/or district Superintendent, develop the agenda for the board meetings. Arrange for copies and background papers to be distributed to the trustees in advance.
- Ensure that the press is provided with the information needed to accurately report the meeting and respond to inquiries;
- Make certain that the trustees are provided with sufficient information to enable them to assess the matters before them;
- Dispatch the meeting's business efficiently, but at the same time ensure that all questions are decided with due consideration;
- Act as a cordial host to delegates, ensuring that their presentation is appropriately heard by the board;
- Keep up-to-date on information and changes affecting the local education system so that accurate reports can be presented to the public, whenever the occasion arises.

An effective Chairperson will:

- Keeps a meeting moving in an orderly fashion;

- Not speak personally to issues before the board unless first yielding the chair to the vice-chairperson;
- Ensure that members are recognized and have a chance to speak on issues;
- Allows both sides of a question to be heard;
- Keep the attention of the board on one matter at a time;
- Know the basics of parliamentary procedure, and refer to the rules of order when necessary. (Robert's Rules of Order.)

Board Meetings

In order that Board meetings will be effective, a Trustee should:

- Attend meetings;
- Have a reasonable knowledge of the conduct of meetings, good governance and rules of order;
- Participate constructively in discussions, confining remarks to the matter under discussion and thus expediting the meeting;
- Abide by board decisions.
- 2 meetings a month from September to June

[Policy 1.120 Board Meetings](#)

Board Procedures

[Sections 67, 69 and 72](#) of the *School Act* provide the legislative basis for meetings, public attendance and minutes for regular meetings.

The secretary treasurer or another employee designated by the board under subsection 69 (4) must be present at the time that a decision of the board is rendered and must record any decision.

Regular Meetings – are intended for the discussion and resolution of the vast majority of board business. As the board is a public body, these public meetings must be open to the general public and the news media.

In-Camera – is a term derived from Latin and Greek meaning ‘vault’ or ‘arched cover’ respectively. In simple terms, it means ‘privately’ and it is therefore not appropriate to call these *in-camera* sessions specific meetings. **Confidentiality**

By simple majority, Boards may vote to move ‘*in-camera*’ and out of ‘*in-camera*’ for the discussion and resolution of specific items of business usually concerning one of three “L” issues : 1) legal or contract 2) labour or personnel or 3) Land - acquisition or disposition. Such sessions can and should be restricted to board members and employees of the board. While a record of the *in-camera* session must be maintained but is not made available to the public, a ‘synopsis’ of the session is made available to the public.

Special Meetings – called by the Chairperson, or on requisition, in writing, signed by not less than four (4) Trustees, and each Trustee shall be given not less than forty-eight (48) hours notice in writing (except in the case of special meetings called in extreme emergencies) specifying the business to be considered at such special meetings. No business other than that specified in the notice calling the meeting shall be discussed.

Rules of Procedure at Meeting

The conduct of the Board and its disposition of business shall be subject to relevant provisions of the *School Act*, Robert’s Rules of Order and the following procedural rules and Board [Policy 1.130 Rules of Procedures](#)

- (a) The Chairperson, or in the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, will preside over Board meetings. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chairperson, the Board members present should elect a temporary Chairperson who will preside for that meeting only, or for that part of the meeting which the Chair and Vice-Chairperson are absent.
- (b) A quorum of the Board is a majority of the trustees holding office at the time of the meeting.
- (c) The Board may adjourn a meeting by motion. The motion to adjourn requires a second and majority vote but is neither debatable nor amendable.
- (d) A complete agenda, including supporting data, should be prepared by the Secretary Treasurer and/or the Superintendent in consultation with the Chairperson, and distributed to each member of the Board prior to the meeting. The agenda should follow a prescribed order of business but at a minimum, should provide the following items.
 - ❖ Adoption of Agenda
 - ❖ Approval of Minutes
 - ❖ Reports (Officers, Committees, etc)
 - ❖ Unfinished Business
 - ❖ New Business

- (e) Prior to obtaining the floor, a member must first secure recognition from the Chairperson.
- (f) The Chairperson will present each agenda item for discussion soliciting elaboration from administration when and if necessary.
- (g) The Board speaks through motions. All decisions of the Board are formalized through resolution (motions). Some motions require a simple majority of those members present while others require a 2/3 majority.
- (h) Bylaws are more important and formalized decisions of the Board. Legislation requires 3 readings of each bylaw. The practice of 3 readings of a bylaw reflects the importance and necessity of a transparent, public process, allowing ample opportunity for the public to provide input. Normally, a Board would give one reading at each of 3 consecutive regular meetings. Two readings are the maximum number of readings allowed at any one meeting unless the Board, with a 2/3 majority, resolves to give all 3 readings at one meeting. Bylaws are often used to formalize the Board's structure and governance. They are **required** for some items of business, such as the annual budget and capital plan. No bylaw or resolution may be inconsistent with the *School Act*.

Minutes of Board Meetings

The [School Act \(S.72\)](#) requires minutes of **all meetings** of the Board be recorded, certified as correct by the Secretary Treasurer and signed by the Chairperson at the next meeting. The minutes of the Board record the validity of its decisions and provide a permanent record of Board business and decisions.

Robert's Rules of Order prescribes that minutes, "should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members." Generally, that means that decisions are recorded – not discussion.

Section 72 of the *School Act* prescribes that the **minutes of in-camera sessions** are required to be a "general statement as to the nature of the matters discussed and the general nature of the decisions reached..."

Minutes should provide for the following standard:

- ❖ The type of meeting (special or regular)
- ❖ Date, time and location
- ❖ Who presided (Chairperson)
- ❖ Approval of minutes of previous meeting
- ❖ All Main motions and disposition
- ❖ Secondary Motions that were not defeated or withdrawn

- ❖ Notices of motion
- ❖ Points of order
- ❖ Time of adjournment

Minutes are reviewed and approved by the Board at the next regular meeting. A special meeting does not approve minutes; its minutes should be approved at the next regular meeting. Corrections to minutes are limited to those necessitated by clerical omissions or errors and “*are normally done by unanimous consent.*” A motion to approve minutes is not required, although, if there are contentious issues with respect to them, a motion to approve is not out of order. Corrections, if any, are noted and the Chairperson then declares the minutes approved or approved as corrected. The approved minutes should be maintained in a secure fashion and location.

Committees

There shall be two (2) standing committees of the Board, as follows:

1. **Operations:** The Operations Committee has a broad mandate with responsibility for ‘corporate matters’. It focuses on the business aspects of the District including, facilities, finance, labour relations, audits, personnel, maintenance, bussing, etc.
2. **Policy:** Committee reflects the need and true purpose of the board which is to provide governance to the district through policy.

The board may choose appoint a Community Relations Committee of the Board on an ‘*as-required*’ or ad-hoc basis. In general, Community Relations Committee reflects the ongoing need to communicate with stakeholders and the public.

The committee shall be comprised of 3 Trustees. Quorum shall be two (2). In the event quorum is not reached, the Board Chair/Vice-Chair or representative, *ex officio*, will have voting rights for the particular committee meeting. The Committee Chairperson and regular members shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. The term of appointment is one (1) year. The appointments shall be reviewed annually after the December regular meeting. The Chairperson will make every reasonable effort to assign trustees to positions that reflect individual’s interest and skill. The Chairperson of the Board is a member of the Committee *ex officio*. Committee meetings shall be open to the public and receive delegations upon request. The committee may, if the majority decide, to meet *in-camera*.

Each member of the Board should accept his/her assignment to working committees willingly and be prepared to carry out his/her fair share of committee work.

Committees are groups of one or more individuals, elected or appointed by the Board to investigate or take action on certain matters or subjects. A committee

operates within, and is limited to, the authority delegated to it by the Board. This delegation of authority is often defined within *Terms of Reference* and can be found either in policy or within an Organisational Bylaw.

Committees are the backbone of any Board: they work within their respective mandates, fulfilling the direction of, and making recommendations to, the Board. *Special Committees*, sometimes referred to as *Ad hoc* Committees, are charged with a specific task. Once completed, the committee ceases to exist.

Educational issues, obviously the cornerstone of what the District does, are of such paramount importance, that the Board accords education a separate functionality. The ***Education Forum*** provides an opportunity in which the Board can engage the whole community on educational issues. Those issues necessarily involve all the standing committees: the business side of education, the policy needs of education and community relations, but it is of such over-arching importance that it is viewed as more than just a committee of the Board.

Committees normally meet in the second week of every month, except July and August. The agenda is established cooperatively with the Committee Chairperson and administration and a committee report, which also serves as the minutes, is prepared with recommendations to the Board. Although a motion is appropriate to accept from a Committee Report, separate motions are usually the best mechanism for specific recommendations contained within the report.

[Policy 1.150 Standing Committees](#)

Committee of the Whole is a parliamentary mechanism allowing the Board to simulate the less formal rules of committee procedure and give '*detailed consideration to a matter*' as a whole Board. There are 3 forms of Committee of the Whole with "*Informal Consideration*" being the most common and appropriate for Boards of Education. A motion to go into a Committee of the Whole is required and is subject to the rules associated with a motion to commit or refer.

It is not appropriate for the Board's minutes to reflect the proceedings while in Committee of the Whole except to the extent of an ordinary committee's report. It is appropriate however, as it is for other committees, to maintain a record of the proceedings. When proceedings are completed, the Chairperson is required to 'Rise and Report' on the Committee's proceedings. Those decisions are reflected in the minutes of the Board.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

General

Boards of Education “*may determine local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district.*” ([SA, Section 85\(2\)\(a\)](#)).

Policies are approved statements by the Board that define and govern the organization. They are often accompanied by a set of administrative procedures, regulations or rules, devised by district staff to implement the intent of the policy statements. Policy needs are only obviated by legislation. In other words, there is no need for a Board to develop policy if legislation exists dealing with the same subject unless that legislation requires Boards to do so.

School District 54 also utilizes administrative procedures to support board policies. These are regulatory procedures to provide the specific details necessary to support and enforce policy. Administrative procedures fall under the authority of the Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer, but are usually provided in to the board in consultation in reference to specific policy.

There are a variety of approaches to policy governance ranging from quite a prescriptive approach where policies are developed for any and every eventuality, to the other end of the spectrum in which very few policies provide a broad statement of the desired operating environment. Similarly, there is no consensus on the Board’s role in the development of administrative procedures. All Boards must take the time to understand the nature of corporate governance, utilize best practices, and find a system that works for them.

A school board governs a diverse system involving the professional educators, trades and clerical personnel, parents, community groups and students. Policies and regulations are necessary for the effective operation and coordination of the many parts of the school system. They are also necessary to ensure quality education. Policies relating to the provision of a high standard of education are among those often omitted from school board discussions and policy manuals. As the legislation suggests, policies are developed locally and should reflect ***local values and principles***.

The BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) provides access to a policy database of BC School District policies on their website.

What Are Effective Policies?

Elected trustees bring their own unique sets of values to the school board. The processes of defining board values, mission statement development, etc. are important because they should provide the foundation of school board policies.

The Board of Education of School District 54 has committed to the following values:

Honesty * Fairness * Respect * Responsibility * Compassion

A good policy statement is a combination of a variety of factors. Listed below are some criteria by which you may judge a policy to be effective. **School Board Policies:**

1. Are **value-based** statements that define the operating environment;
2. Explain “what” the school board wants or expects of the education system;
3. Provide leadership and guidance to the professional staff of the district;
4. Leave room for professional judgment in achieving the intent of the policy;
5. Are usually the result of significant consultation with others;
6. Are written statements approved by the school board;
7. Are precise and clearly stated;
8. Deal with any aspect of education of concern to the board;
9. Are continuously subject to evaluation;
10. Convey an idea beyond particular circumstances which may change;
11. Are accessible to everyone in the district;
12. Supported by administrative procedures if necessary to clarify policy.

Why Are Policies Important?

1. They are the legitimate exercise of authority and responsibility for local control of public education;
2. They provide continuity in education decision with changing school boards and staff;
3. They save time at the board table; many decisions may be left to staff with appropriate policy guidance;
4. They allow school boards to communicate more effectively with the public;
5. They provide direction to the professional staff;
6. They focus trustees’ attention on the key issues;
7. They control the influences of elected or appointed officials.

When Are Policies Developed?

The process of arriving at effective policy statements never ends. The changing nature of education and society’s expectations and demands require that policies be reviewed regularly to suit present conditions.

The need for a policy statement is sometimes highlighted because of a problem situation. In such cases it is important that the policy be proactive rather than reactive. Problems may be brought to the attention of the board from many sources: trustees, staff, parents, community groups, students and others.

Who Develops Policy?

The Board and its committees do. It is the Board's prime function and responsibility. But that responsibility must be discharged in a truly consultative fashion. As elected representatives, policy is the basis upon which you are held accountable. Effective and meaningful consultation can be achieved quite systematically. The long and short of it is that policies are important; the Board must provide the opportunity to listen to and discuss policy issues with its stakeholders.

The Policy Manual

School board policies, bylaws, regulations and other information about the district are classified and published as the school board's policy manual. While the format differs from district to district, nearly all manuals contain policy statements and accompanying regulations. An index system should be developed to organize the manual so that a particular policy or regulation can be easily located. The index system below reflects the key, thematic areas of activity within the school district.

[Policy 1.140 Policy Development & Change](#)

[School District 54 Policy Manual](#)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS / DEVELOPMENT

The District is a member of British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) and the British Columbia Public Schools Employers' Association (BCPSEA). Both organizations provide a range of support, information and development services on a local and pan-provincial basis.

[Policy 1.185 Trustee Professional Development](#)

DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

The Board is responsible for providing guidance in planning a coordinated and systematic way to develop a vision and direction for the school district.

Planning in public education is an essential part of ensuring that all students have every opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing citizens. Planning ensures that resources for public education are used effectively and prioritized to provide optimal results.

[Policy 1.300 District Strategic Plan](#)

[School District 54 Strategic Plan](#)

[Framework for Enhanced Student Learning](#)

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

The Board of Education acknowledges and recognizes that School District No.54 is located on the traditional territory of the Witsuwit'en Nation. The School District has made Reconciliation with the Indigenous community a priority and for many years has sought improvements in educational outcomes for Indigenous students. With these goals in mind, the Board has made several commitments with the Indigenous community.

The Board has signed an Enhancement agreement with Indigenous community representatives: 'Alhk'ikh Hëdilh - Walking Together. The Bulkley Valley's Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement provides the goals, strategies and structures as a framework and commitment for the success of Indigenous students.

The Board has also signed a Local Enhancement Agreement with the Witsset First Nation. This agreement sets out roles and responsibilities between the Witsset First Nation and School District 54. Improvements in educational outcomes, accountability measures, strategies for improvement and financial relationships are all part of the agreement.

In the form of an ongoing commitment, the Board has a trustee and senior staff representative that sit on the Indigenous Education Council and they attend all regular meetings of the council. This council provides advice to the District on supports and programming to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

[District Indigenous Page](#)

TRUSTEE REMUNERATION AND REIMBURSEMENTS

The role of a trustee in public education is a voluntary service to the community requiring time and consideration, primarily, of policy related matters. [Section 71 of the School Act](#) provides the legislative parameters associated with remuneration and expense allowances paid to trustees.

In its consideration of remuneration, the board:

1. May establish remuneration levels as it deems appropriate but any change requires two-thirds (2/3) majority support of **all** trustees to implement such change.
2. Shall be guided by best practices within the province, for districts of comparable size, as reflected by BCSTA's periodic remuneration reviews.

[Policy 1.170 Trustee Remuneration](#)

Trustees shall be reimbursed for reasonable and defined expenses while on approved duty related travel.

[Policy 11.310 Travel Expenses](#)

SCHOOL TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

The provincial *Financial Disclosure Act* is supplementary to all duties and obligations under the *School Act*. It provides for legal proceedings and fines against any School Trustee or municipal employee who does not file a written

disclosure as required. *The Financial Disclosure Act* also provides for damages against the School Trustee or municipal employee who fails to file and who benefits from his/her involvement in a matter which was not disclosed.

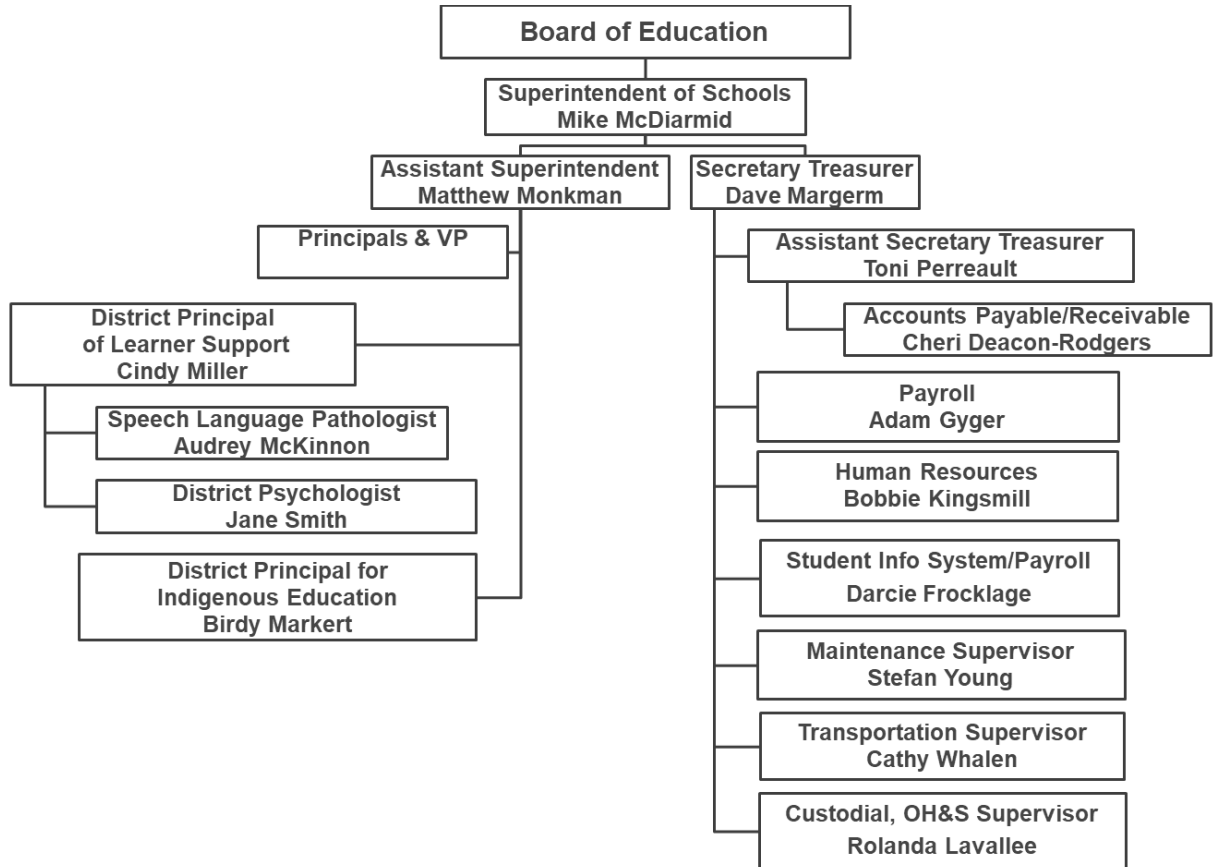
The School District Secretary Treasurer has a copy of this Act and the BC School Trustees Association informs the districts of changes.

Trustee Liability and Indemnification

Trustees often express concern about their personal exposure to litigation. Trustees are indemnified through certain provisions of the [School Act \(s. 95\)](#) and through [Bylaw #2](#).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

➤ Hierarchy chart of District and positions



➤ **Roles:**

○ **Superintendent**

- Oversight of Secretary Treasurer, Assistant Superintendent and Administrators
- School Growth Plans – Updated Annually
 - PVP & Staff Growth Plans
- Framework for Enhancing Student Learning
- District Initiatives & Professional Learning
 - Emerging support opportunities
 - Social Emotional
 - Helping
 - Professional Learning Community
 - Collaboration Rounds
 - Innovation Funds
- BVTU Collective Agreements
- CEF and class size planning/staffing
- District Achievement Plan

○ **Secretary Treasurer**

- Chief Financial Officer and Liaison with Board
- Financial Reporting: Operating, Capital Special Purpose, and other Ministry reporting as required
- Preliminary, Amended and Final Budget & Bylaws
- Recognized as the recording officer of the district
- Policies and Statutory requirements
- Legal, Property and Contract Administration
- Payroll
- CUPE Human Resources and Collective agreement
- Freedom of Information Officer
- Facilities, Transportation, Custodial
- Capital
- Technology

○ **Assistant Superintendent**

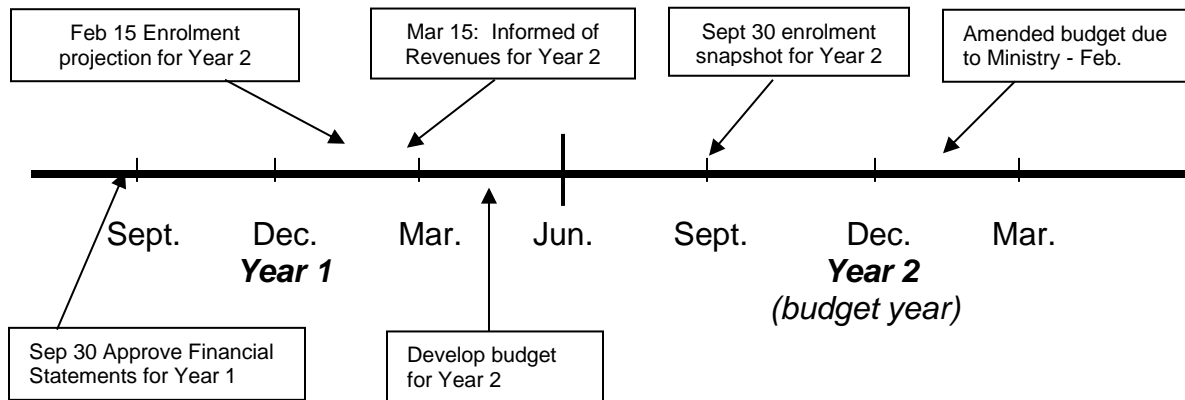
- Supervision of Administration
- Complaints and Investigations
- District Literacy Plan
- Indigenous
- Early Learning
- Community Links
- Trades
- Technology
- French Immersion

FINANCIAL:

Funding

The district is economically dependent on revenues provided by the province. Although revenues from other sources are received, ministry funding based on enrollment, special education, unique geographic factors represent approximately 96% of total revenue. Other revenue sources include Indigenous funding of 3% and small amounts for interest earned and rental income.

Funding is provided semi-annually to better reflect the mid year enrolment changes that may occur. Preliminary funding (*for the next school year*) is identified in mid March of each year based on February enrolment projections. 'Final' funding is provided in February, of the budget year, based on September 30th actual enrolments.



Annual Budget

Each year, a preliminary and amended budget are approved by the Board and submitted to the Ministry. The Board must approve a balanced budget in consideration with a district surplus management policy. Administration and the Board consult on priorities with respect to the budget. The preliminary budget is developed between March and June each year and required by the Ministry by June 30. The amended budget is approved and submitted in February of each year. School Districts are required to provide 3-year financial projections in supporting the District strategic plan.

School districts are 'people driven' organisations: approximately 87% of total expenditures relate to salaries and benefits. Given that all other costs such as bussing, utilities, maintenance, and supplies must be funded from the remaining 13%, there is very little flexibility in the budget.

The budget is developed within a Ministry mandated Chart of Accounts. All accounts are identified in one of 4 'functions':

- *Instruction, (73%)*
- *District Administration, (6%)*
- *Operations & Maintenance (16%), and*
- *Transportation & Housing. (5%)*

Financial Reporting

As a publicly funded entity, the district is required to submit a number of financial reports throughout the year. Examples are the annual Financial Statements, the Government Reporting Entity (GRE) is submitted quarterly; the Statement of Financial Information (SOFI) is submitted annually.

The district is required by legislation to undertake an annual financial audit by an accredited auditing firm. The audit examines financial statements prepared by administration. The Board must approve the audited financial statements and submit them to the Ministry by no later than September 30 of each year.

School Funds

Schools are allocated operating budgets each year. These funds are intended to cover the costs associated with teaching/office supplies, library resources, telephone, copier, sport trips and minor capital. They are allocated on the basis of a base amount, and/or a per pupil amount.

Insurance & Risk Management

Operating a school district involves considerable risk. Risk is assessed and managed in a variety of ways, including policy and through the assistance of the Schools Protection Program (SPP) a government operated branch. Vehicle insurance is obtained through ICBC.

Labour Relations & Collective Agreements

The district employs approximately 350 people. Employees fall into one of three classifications.

1. **Teachers** represented by the Bulkley Valley Teachers' Union (BVTU)
2. **Support Staff** represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
3. **Exempt staff** including school administrators and district level staff

Until recently Boards of Education did their own collective bargaining resulting in widely different collective agreements throughout the province. The BC Public Sector Employers' Association (BCPSEA) now has province-wide responsibility for key aspects of labour relations and collective bargaining. However, there continues to be a role for district and union local engagement.

Both unions are represented by a President who are elected by the membership on an annual basis. The employees who are elected President are given leave to fulfil their union duties. Frequent and effective communications with the union Presidents ensures a stable and productive workplace.

The relationship between the employer and union is governed by a Collective Agreement, the term of which varies.

CAPITAL & FACILITIES

General

The number of schools in the district has evolved over time as enrolment patterns have changed. The district also owns other non-school facilities. The table below provides a summary by location.

	Smithers	Telkwa	Houston
Elementary	2	1	2
Secondary	1	0	1
Alternate School	1	0	1
Other	3	0	1

Smithers elementary schools are K-7 grade configuration, and Houston has a primary K-3 and intermediate 4-7 grade configuration.

Other facilities that the district owns and maintains are the School Board Office, the Learner Support Centre and the Maintenance facilities in Smithers and Houston.

Acquisition of Land & Improvements

The district may, for educational purposes, acquire land and improvements within the district or, with the approval of the minister, land or improvements in another district.

Disposition of Land & Improvements

The district may not dispose of land or improvements unless the facility and land are surplus to educational needs. Such a disposal can be to another board or an independent school for educational purposes or alternatively is approved by the Minister.

Annual Facility Grant (AFG)

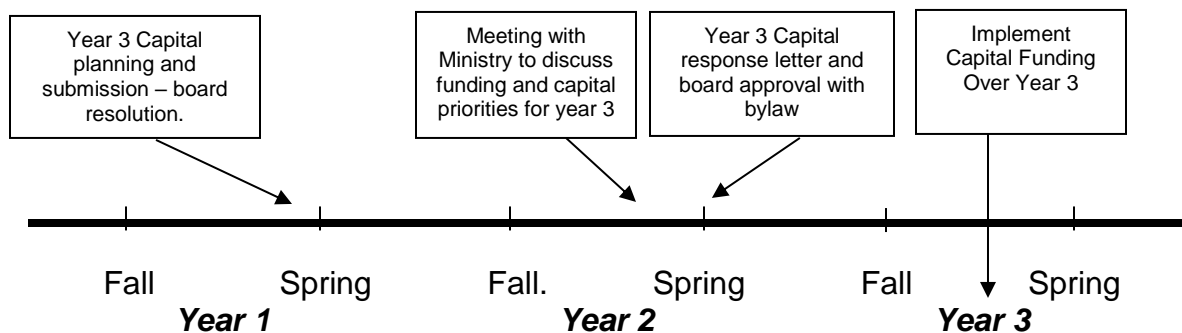
The district receives an Annual Facility Grant (AFG) each year which is enrolment based. The grant is expected to cover the costs of all non-capital facility projects. Currently, the grant is approximately \$700,000.

Ministry Capital Projects

Although the *School Act* does not explicitly state whose responsibility it is, the costs associated with capital projects are typically supported by the government with an expectation that districts will contribute from surplus to a reasonable extent. School busses are considered to be 'capital projects'. The *School Act* does not define what is, or is not a 'capital project'.

The capital plans can be divided into "Major Capital" and "Minor Capital" plans. Major capital plans are divided into Seismic Mitigation, Expansion Replacement and Demolition. Minor capital plans include School Enhancement, Carbon Neutral, Bus Acquisition, and Playgrounds.

A capital plan must, by resolution, be approved by the board and submitted to the minister annually for approval. If the minister approves the capital plan, the Board must prepare a capital bylaw. The district's capital plan is developed on a 3-year horizon and updated annually.



Maintenance

Maintenance is divided into Facilities Maintenance, Transportation and Custodial services. Each of the three departments have their own manager that reports to the Secretary Treasurer.

General repairs and maintenance are provided by district personnel and, to a lesser extent, third party contractors. The district employs, and the maintenance department directs, a qualified staff of trades personnel, bus drivers, custodians and labourers. The scope of work is quite broad and includes repairs and/or maintenance to:

Facilities maintenance includes:

- Grounds, landscaping and playgrounds
- building envelopes & roofing,

- mechanical, HVAC, DDC,
- alarm, access & controls
- electrical & plumbing
- facility rentals & security
- general building

Transportation includes:

- buses
- bus drivers
- mechanics
- district fleet

Custodial & Occupational Health and Safety

- facility cleaning
- facility rentals
- occupational health and safety requirements
- WorkSafe

COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

ABE = Adult Basic Education
ACEBC = Association for Community Education in BC
BAA = Board/Authority Authorized Courses
BCASBO = BC Association of School Business Officials
BCCPAC = BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
BCTC = BC Teachers' Council
BCELC = BC Education Leadership Council
BCPSEA = BC Public School Employers' Association
BCPVPA = BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
BCSSA = BC School Superintendents Association
BCSTA = BC School Trustees Association
BCTF = BC Teachers' Federation
BCLTA = BC Library Trustees Association
CAPP = Career and Personal Planning
CAPSLE = Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education
CEA = Canadian Education Association
CMEC = Council of Ministers of Education
CSF = Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
CSBA = Canadian School Boards Association
CTF = Canadian Teachers' Federation
CUPE = Canadian Union of Public Employees
DASH = Directorate of Agencies for School Health
EAC = Education Advisory Council
ELL = English Language Learners
ESL = English as a Second Language
FISA = Federation of Independent School Associations of BC
FNESC = First Nations Education Steering Committee
FOIPOP / FIPPA / FOIPPA = Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
IEP = Individual Education Program
ISC = Indigenous Services Canada
IRP = Integrated Resource Package
LRB = Labour Relations Board
MAE = Ministry of Advanced Education
MAF = Make a Future, Careers in BC Education
MASH = Municipalities, Academic organizations, Schools and Hospitals
MECC = Ministry of Education and Child Care
MCFD = Ministry for Children and Family Development
MUSH = Municipalities, Universities, Schools and Hospitals
LEA = Local Education Agreement
NCA = National Children's Agenda
NSBA = National School Boards Association
PSA = Provincial Specialists' Association (under BCTF)
PSEC = Public Sector Employers' Council

SEA = Special Education Assistant
SPOABC = School Plant Officials Association of BC
SSTA = Saskatchewan School Trustees Association
TTOC = Teacher Teaching on Call (formerly substitute teacher)
TQB = Teacher Qualification Board
TQS = Teacher Qualification Service
UBCIC = Union of BC Indian Chiefs