

# AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## BOARD POLICY #7

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### ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR

**Legal References:** *Education Act: Sections 170-171 Duties and Powers of Boards; Education Act: Section 208 (12) Voting of the Chair; Education Act: Section 230 Compliance with Board Obligations; Bill 177 Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act*

**Related References:** *Educating Together: A Handbook for Trustees, School Boards and Communities, OPSBA 2006; Robert's Rules of Order*

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The Chair of Avon Maitland District School Board safeguards the integrity of the board's processes and represents the Board of Trustees to the broader community as the official spokesperson for the board. The Chair ensures that each board member has a full and fair opportunity to be heard and understood by the other members of the board in order that collective opinion can be developed and a corporate decision reached. The board's ability to discharge its obligation is enhanced by the leadership and guidance provided by the Chair.

#### 1. Responsibilities

The Chair of the Board shall:

- a) be *ex-officio* (meaning: to be a voting member when in attendance, but not to be counted in determining quorum), a member of all committees of the board, unless membership is determined by statute or collective agreement;
- b) preside over meetings of the board;
- c) preside over meetings of the Committee of the Whole in open session;
- d) sign minutes approved by the board;
- e) be a signing officer of the board;
- f) recommend to the board, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, board member assignments to board committees;
- g) recommend to the board, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, assignment of board members as representatives to any other organization to which the board has the power or privilege to appoint representatives;  
(Note: Board members will be given an opportunity to express their preferences in relation to committee involvement and other interests [using Form 010], and these preferences will be reviewed in preparing recommendations for board member assignments.)
- h) be the official spokesperson for the board on matters which reflect the will of the board through resolution;
- i) provide leadership to the board in maintaining the board's focus on the Strategic Plan and supporting annual plans;
- j) provide leadership to the board in maintaining the board's focus on the board's mission; and
- k) assume such other responsibilities as may be specified by the board.

## 2. Implementation of the Chair's Responsibilities

### 2.1 Reviewing the Agenda

- 2.1.1 The Chair shall establish agendas for board meetings, in consultation with the board's Director of Education (*Education Act*, Section 218.4 [c]).
- 2.1.2 The Chair shall ensure that members of the board have the information needed for informed discussion of the agenda items (*Education Act*, Section 218.4 [d]).
- 2.1.3 The Chair shall ensure that meeting agenda content is only about those issues which, according to board policy, clearly belong to the board to decide and have not been delegated to the Director of Education.

### 2.2 Reviewing Minutes

- 2.2.1 Where possible, the Chair of the Board will review the draft minutes of the board prior to publication for approval.

### 2.3 Preserving an Orderly Process

- 2.3.1 The Chair shall preside at all regular and special meetings and ensure that such meetings are conducted in accordance with the *Education Act*, and the policies established by the board.
- 2.3.2 The Chair shall vote with the other members of the board upon all motions.
- 2.3.3 The Chair shall preserve order and decorum and decide all questions of order or privilege. The Chair may rule any matter out of order, giving the reason for the ruling. The ruling of the Chair shall be final, subject only to an appeal to the board without debate. In the case of a tie vote, with the Chair voting, in an appeal to the board of the Chair's ruling, the tie vote sustains the Chair.
- 2.3.4 The Chair shall call meetings to order in accordance with the prescribed meeting times and shall determine if a quorum is present.
- 2.3.5 The Chair shall announce the order of business of the board and state and put to vote all questions, which come before the board.
- 2.3.6 The Chair shall declare the results of all votes on all matters before the board.
- 2.3.7 Aspects of the role of the Chair in presiding at meetings of the board are also found in Board Policy 9 Board Governance By-Laws.

### 2.4 Acting as a Facilitator

- 2.4.1 The Chair has a duty to ensure that all board members have an equal opportunity to express their views.
- 2.4.2 The Chair may draw to the attention of the board any factors which may be crucial and relating to the pending question and which appear to have been overlooked by the board. Such factors might be related legislation, board policy or the history of the board.
- 2.4.3 In the event that the Chair decides to take part in the debate, the Chair shall call upon the Vice-Chair to take the Chair after affording the Vice-Chair an opportunity to speak to the motion.
- 2.4.4 With the unanimous consent of the board, the Chair may speak to the pending matter without vacating the Chair.

## 2.5 **Expediting Business**

- 2.5.1 The Chair is responsible for expediting the business of the board in every way compatible with the rights of the members and for enforcing this policy as necessary, to ensure the orderly conduct of the board's business.
- 2.5.2 In order to ensure the expeditious use of the board's time, the Chair, subject to a member's right of appeal in accordance with Section 5.3.2 of Board Policy 9 Board Governance By-Laws, shall refuse to recognize motions which are obviously frivolous or dilatory.
- 2.5.3 The Chair shall attempt to ensure that each member who wishes to be heard on a matter is heard, but, subject to a member's right of appeal in accordance with Section 5.3.2 of Board Policy 9 Board Governance By-Laws, when it is obvious that the debate is becoming repetitive, the Chair shall indicate that the debate is closed and call the question.

## 2.6 **Providing Board Leadership**

- 2.6.1 The Chair may call a special meeting of the board at any time. (Section 2.3.1 of Board Policy 9 Board Governance By-Laws)
- 2.6.2 The Chair shall convey the views and decisions of the board to the board's Director of Education.
- 2.6.3 The Chair shall be in regular contact with the Director of Education to stay informed of significant developments within Avon Maitland District School Board and shall be in regular contact with the Director of Education to maintain a working knowledge of decisions.
- 2.6.4 The Chair shall communicate significant developments and decisions of the Director to the rest of the board as expeditiously as reasonable.
- 2.6.5 The Chair shall ensure that the board engages in regular review or self-evaluation of its effectiveness as a board.
- 2.6.6 The Chair shall be the chief spokesperson for the board except for those matters where the board has previously delegated this role to another individual or group.
- 2.6.7 Every year, the Chair shall organize a minimum of one full-day PD session addressing areas of need as identified by the consensus of board members, and any other PD sessions as the board requests.
  - 2.6.7.1 Additionally, in the January following an election, there shall be a full-day orientation to introduce governance and the role of the trustee; and
  - 2.6.7.2 In the fall of an election year, the outgoing Chair shall organize an introductory session for the new board to be held prior to the Inaugural meeting to review initial logistics and the Code of Conduct declaration.