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## A GUIDE TO SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE EDUCATION SERVICES STAFF

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO RAISE A CONCERN ABOUT SOMETHING AT SCHOOL

If you have any concerns about your child's education or something that happened at school, address them quickly and appropriately. Communicate your concerns calmly and clearly.

#### STEP 1: TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

The first step to addressing a concern is to contact your child's teacher. The classroom teacher knows each student's strengths and needs, and can most accurately provide information on how to improve or fix the issue. You can:

- book an appointment
- talk to the teacher about your concerns and how your child feels
- be specific about describing your concern
- ask questions to help you understand school policies and procedures
- listen to the teacher's point of view and suggestions
- focus on the problem, not the people involved
- be prepared to explore options for resolution
- follow up on the outcome.

#### STEP 2: TALK TO THE PRINCIPAL

If you do not feel your concern has been addressed after talking to your child's teacher, make an appointment to speak to the school principal or assistant principal. They will ask whether or not you have first spoken directly with your child's teacher. A meeting may be set up with the student, teacher, and principal to address your concern.

#### STEP 3: CONTACT GYPSD CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES

If a resolution is not reached, contact Central Support Services. They will ask whether or not you have already spoken directly to the school principal. Central Support Services provides advice and mediation to support schools, parents, community members and other educational partners.

#### STEP 4: CONTACT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

If you feel the problem still has not been solved, you can contact the Superintendent of Schools or your local trustee.

#### EDUCATION SERVICES CENTRE

The staff at the **Education Services Centre** provide advice, mediation, coaching, training and proactive planning to support schools, parents, community members and other educational partners.

Anyone can call the **Education Services Centre** to get information on access to education, best practices for working with students with low attendance, field trips, health issues, lunchroom fees, and pre-enrolment and registration. This department also helps interpret

legislation, District policies, regulations and procedures, and provides information on programming for students with special education needs.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

The Superintendent provides advice and support to the Board of Trustees and ensures board policy is implemented effectively.

The Superintendent is supported in this work by the staff in the Superintendent's Office, which is made up of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents of Schools, Directors, and the Education Services Support Team.

The Superintendent is also responsible for planning, organizing, directing, controlling, coordinating and evaluating administrative regulations, and sound educational and business practices to achieve the District's Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities.

## **ABOUT THE BOARD**

Alberta school boards help shape the future of local communities by governing the education of young people. The provincial government, through the Minister of Education, grants school boards the authority to make decisions regarding the direction and quality of local public education. Accountability to the public is entrenched through the election of local school board trustees every four years. The last school board election was held October 16, 2017. The next one will be in October 2021.

## **SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is up to school boards to ensure all children in the community receive a quality education. Specific school board responsibilities include:

- Communicating, informing and involving parents, staff, and the community-at-large in school board decisions and activities.
- Adopting an annual budget that achieves jurisdiction priorities.
- Setting goals and priorities for the jurisdiction that achieve provincial education standards, meet the needs of students and reflect the community's wishes.
- Making and enforcing policies that set out standards and expectations regarding the actions of administration, teachers, and students.
- Lobbying the municipal and provincial governments on education issues of importance to the jurisdiction.
- Adjudicating policy or decision appeals.
- Hiring and evaluating the superintendent.

## **THE ROLE OF TRUSTEES**

A key responsibility for trustees is to stay in touch with community stakeholders so that they understand, and reflect in their decision-making, what all citizens' value and want from their local public schools. It is important to note that trustees do not represent any one school, neighbourhood or community. Rather, they make decisions based on the needs of the entire jurisdiction. As elected officials, trustees have these roles:

- **Trustees are advocates for our children** – assessing educational policies in terms of what is best for the development of the whole child.
- **Trustees are political officials** – they are members of a government unit charged with the responsibility to govern the affairs of the school authority. They are responsible to their

electorate through the democratic process. They are to serve the public and hear their voice.

- **Trustees are goal setters for their school system** – identifying the results the board wishes the system to achieve.
- **Trustees are planners** – setting priorities in light of community expectations, available resources and sound educational practice.
- **Trustees are evaluators** – ensuring policies are within the parameters of the board's authority; consistent with goals; compatible with other policies; implemented in a fair and just manner and effective in achieving intended results.
- **Trustees are financial planners** – it is a statement to the administration and the public that the board is accountable for the dollars spent and it reflects the board's priorities and the blending of the needs and wishes of the community.
- **Trustees are policy makers** – crafting policies that guide the administration and other employees toward achieving the jurisdiction's goals.
- **Trustees are legislators** – setting local policy to meet local contextual needs and help drive public policy changes at the provincial level.
- **Trustees are communicators** – interacting with the many publics that have a stake in K-12 education.
- **Trustees are advocates for education** – keeping the positive image of schools before the community to ensure that education is given a high priority and the community is aware of public education's accomplishments.
- **Trustees are a bridge** – between information of the school authority, the provincial government, and the public.
- **Trustees are lobbyists** – communicating with all levels of government to ensure that local voice are heard by those who have the power to keep education needs high on the list of priorities.

The **Alberta School Boards Association** provides support and resources for school boards and trustees. Visit them at [asba.ab.ca](http://asba.ab.ca).