

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK – OCTOBER 20-26, 2013

2013 marks the 5th annual celebration of Local Government Week.

Trustees are going back to school to raise the civic awareness of Ontario's students.

Did you know....?

- School board trustees are the oldest form of elected representation in Ontario. Since 1807, generations of community-minded citizens have made decisions on behalf of local publicly funded schools, building the foundation of the system we have today.
- The election of school board trustees is governed by the Education Act and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996. Both are the laws or rules that trustees follow.
- There are three kinds of trustees:
 - Trustees elected every four years during municipal elections. There are 317 publicly elected trustees representing the 31 public English school boards and three school authorities across Ontario
 - First Nation Trustees appointed to the board by their First Nation. There are 19 appointed trustees among the 31 public English school boards across Ontario
 - Student Trustees elected by the student body of the board. The Ontario Student Trustees' Association represents more than two million students.
- The Kindergarten-Grade 12 education sector is the second-largest recipient of provincial funding, after healthcare. The provincial government spends about \$22.4 billion each year.
- Public school trustees oversee budgets ranging from \$30 million to \$2.6 billion.
- The current Premier, Kathleen Wynne, was a school board trustee with the Toronto District School Board.
- The current Minister of Education, Liz Sandals, was a school board trustee with the Upper Grand DSB (in Guelph) and the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA).
- Many MPs, MPPs, Mayors and Municipal Councillors began their political careers as school board trustees; others choose to stay a trustee, committed to this important local position.
- The next municipal election is October 27, 2014.

Strong Public Education System...

- Preparing students to become productive and contributing citizens is the foundation of a civil society.
- Ontario's English public district school boards provide universally accessible education for all students, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or cultural backgrounds; social or economic status; gender; individual exceptionalism; or religious preference.
- The English public system is founded on the principle of equality of educational opportunity: every student deserves an opportunity to achieve to his or her fullest potential.
- Public school boards provide high standards in their programs and ensure that there are supports and resources to help all students reach those standards.
- Public school boards also focus on character education to ensure that students develop as caring and responsible members of their community and of Canadian society as a whole.
- Character education embraces values such as Citizenship, Cooperation, Courage, Empathy, Fairness, Honesty, Humility, Inclusiveness, Initiative, Integrity, Kindness, Optimism, Perseverance, Resilience, Respect, and Responsibility.
- English public district school boards, in partnership with parents and caregivers, prepare students for success in whatever field they choose.

What are the “rules” for school?

- In Ontario, children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 must be enrolled in a formal education program. The province's Education Act and the regulations made under it establish the framework for the delivery of education programs.
- In 2010, the provincial government introduced Full Day Kindergarten for four and five-year-olds across Ontario. This is the fourth year of implementation.
- An Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requires students to complete 30 credits (18 compulsory, 12 optional), pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and complete 40 hours of community involvement activities.
- Students who leave school before earning the OSSD may be granted the Ontario Secondary School Certificate.

What are the Responsibilities of a School Board?

School boards – the elected board of trustees – are responsible for student achievement and well-being, for ensuring effective stewardship of the board's resources and for delivering effective and appropriate education programs for their students.

The Education Act and its regulations set out the services that district school boards and school authorities must offer. The responsibilities of a school board include a key governance role with respect to:

- operating schools according to provincial legislation;
- having a vision statement that reflects the board's philosophy and local needs and priorities;
- setting the board's budget within the provincial grants and accompanying regulations;
- implementing curriculum according to ministry curriculum policy;
- developing and delivering other programs that reflect provincial policies and local priorities;
- providing for the hiring of teachers and other staff required in their schools;
- maintaining school buildings and property with regard to student safety and in accordance with provincial legislation; and
- monitoring the policies of the schools and the achievement of students and, through the director of education, holding the entire system accountable for meeting provincial and board standards.

People in a School Board...

- **Trustees** play a key leadership role in ensuring that schools operate within the standards established by the province, and that the programs and services remain responsive to the communities they serve.
- The **Director of Education** is the chief executive officer and chief education officer of the school board. The director is the sole employee who reports directly to the board and acts as secretary of the board.
- **Supervisory Officers**, often called superintendents, are accountable to the director of education for the implementation, operation, and supervision of educational programs in their schools.
- **Principals** are the educational leaders within their school communities and ensure that the programs that are in place are effective and align with board and ministry policies.
- **Teachers** are the front-line representatives of the education system. Their many activities go beyond instruction and include encouraging students to pursue learning, maintaining classroom discipline, and evaluating students' learning and progress.
- **Support Staff** – It takes a whole range of people to support students and keep a safe and healthy school environment. Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, Caretakers, School Secretaries, Social Workers, Speech and Language Pathologists are just some of these.

What are the Responsibilities for a School Board Trustee?

As members of the board, trustees collectively carry out the following key roles:

- Establishing vision and climate;
- Multi-year Strategic Planning, goal setting and appraisal;
- Policy making;
- Recruiting and reviewing performance of the chief executive;
- Student achievement and well-being;
- Allocating resources;
- School facilities;
- Student supports; and
- Engaging and communicating with parents and constituents.

Recent amendments to the Education Act have also included these duties for trustees:

- Attend and participate in meetings of the board, including meetings of board committees;
- Consult with parents, students and supporters of the board on the board's multi-year plan;
- Bring concerns of parents, students and supporters of the board to the attention of the board;
- Uphold the implementation of any board resolution after it is passed by the board;
- Entrust the day-to-day management of the board to its staff through the board's Director of Education;
- Maintain focus on student achievement and well-being; and
- Comply with the board's code of conduct.

Trustee Shelley Laskin Contact Information:

The Toronto District School Board is a large organization and it is my role as Trustee, to help you navigate to ensure that your questions and concerns are addressed.

The first step to resolution begins with good conversation.

I send out a weekly update to let you know about current issues in our schools and during the year host Ward Forums. I am always anxious to learn more about your local school successes, issues and priorities.

If you would like to be on my e-mail list, have something to share or wish to speak with me directly, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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