



BCSTA

British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

A GUIDE FOR 2014 SCHOOL TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

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WELCOME

TERESA REZANSOFF, President, BC School Trustees Association

Congratulations on making the commitment to run - or run again - for school trustee. As you embark on your campaign, check with your local school district as most will have candidate information packages that include information about and copies of the forms you will need.

What does BCSTA do? The British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) serves and supports our members, BC's public Boards of Education (Boards), in their key work of improving student achievement. At the local level, BCSTA provides professional development, legal counsel, and communications services to member Boards of Education. Provincially, our non-profit Association acts as Boards' strong, unified voice in advocating to government, other education partners, and the public on matters effecting public education.

I wish you the best of luck in the coming weeks. Thank you for your dedication to public education in our province.

INTRODUCTION

Local school trustee elections allow the community an important opportunity to lead and oversee our valuable investment in public education. Trustees are hardworking community leaders who come together in the context of a Board in support of student success. The work is demanding but important and rewarding.

BC is a large and diverse province with different priorities, needs, and special requirements in a variety of areas. School trustees work through their Boards to address these local needs. School trustees serve as liaisons to various community groups and organizations, reporting back to the rest of the Board. In some districts, school trustees may be named as liaisons to schools in their school district and attend Parent Advisory Council meetings at these schools.

The British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) is a provincial voice for trustees and Boards of Education in our province. We offer trustees and school districts support and act as a provincial advocate for public education.

DISCLAIMER: This guide provides general information and should not be relied upon as legal advice. If you require legal advice, you should retain qualified legal professionals to advise you in the context of your particular circumstances.

Please note that most references in this Guide do not apply to elections for the francophone education authority or the City of Vancouver.



WHAT DOES A TRUSTEE DO?

When an individual is elected as a school trustee, he or she becomes one member of a governing board, responsible for ensuring that the community's priorities are represented in public education. It is the Board as a whole that has legal authority, not any one individual trustee or the Board Chair.

Boards of Education share a co-governance relationship with the provincial government and the Ministry of Education. The provincial government and Boards of Education are democratically elected to represent the public interest in education. The respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Boards of Education are described in the [School Act](#). Further information regarding co-governance is included in [BCSTA's Policies](#).

The *School Act* outlines the primary functions of Boards of Education, including:

- Attending Board and committee meetings;
- setting local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools;
- employing the staff necessary for school district operations, such as teachers, school principals, supervisory personnel, aides, clerical and administrative personnel, custodians, building maintenance staff, bus drivers, etc.;
- establishing conditions of employment for employees within the framework of collective bargaining for unionized staff and the regulations regarding compensation for exempt staff;
- preparing and approving the school district's operating budgets and capital plans;
- hearing appeals from parents and students where a staff decision significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student;
- approving local courses and resource materials for use in the school district;
- approving annual school plans; and
- establishing district literacy plans and achievement contracts for improving student achievement.

For more information about BCSTA and Boards of Education, please refer to [Q+A Your Board of Education](#).

TRUSTEE ELECTORAL AREAS

School districts are divided into trustee electoral areas from which trustees are elected. You are not restricted to running for trustee only in the community where you reside.

There may be more than one trustee elected from a trustee electoral area. The composition of the Boards (number of trustees, trustee electoral areas, number of trustees elected from each trustee electoral area) is determined by the Minister of Education to reflect the communities and the population of each school district in the province.

In some school districts, all trustees are elected at large. That is, there is only one trustee electoral area, the whole school district, from which all trustees are elected.

Other district trustee electoral areas may be composed of:

- one or more municipalities;
- a combination of municipalities and rural areas, and rural areas only; and
- some trustees elected at large and others elected from smaller trustee electoral areas.

In some communities, interested electors have formed elector organizations that endorse candidates.

Local governments and Boards of Education may cooperate on the running of elections. Some trustee elections may be conducted by a municipality or regional district. Therefore, information will be available and nominations filed in that office instead of, or as well as, the Board of Education office.

FILING FOR NOMINATION

If you want to run for Board of Education, you must be a Canadian citizen who is 18 years old by election day. You must have been a BC resident for at least six months. You must not be legally disqualified from being nominated for, being elected to or holding office as a trustee

If you are endorsed by an elector organization, there are additional documents that must be completed and returned

to the chief election officer. Information regarding elector organizations is available on the Elections BC website. Some Boards also require nomination deposits of up to \$100.

BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

You may be a Board of Education employee and want to run for a seat on your employer's board. Before you are nominated, you must notify the Board of your intention

to run. Then, starting on the first day of the nomination period, you must take a leave of absence from work while running, and resign from your employment with the district if you are elected.

If you are a Board of Education employee and want to seek election to a Board of Education that is not your employer, you don't have to take the leave of absence or resign.



KEY DATES

November 15, 2014 is the date of the next general school election. This year, nominations will be accepted from Tuesday, September 30 to Friday, October 10. The deadline for nominations is extended to October 14 if there are not enough candidates nominated in a trustee electoral area by that time. A list of significant election dates is available on the Ministry of Education website.

FILING YOUR NOMINATION

You will submit paperwork to the local chief election officer. Most Boards prepare candidate packages, including samples of necessary forms. In addition, the Ministry of Education website has information about nomination forms.

Different districts require

different numbers of nominators. Confirm with your local election officer that you have the correct number.

FINANCIAL INTERESTS

You must also include [a written disclosure of your financial interests, as required by section 2\(1\) of the *Financial Disclosure Act*](#).

This statement must provide details of both your corporate and personal holdings

IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

You alone are responsible for complying with the election rules, including ensuring all of the documents and the deposit (if required) connected with your nomination are filed with the chief election officer for your community by the deadline of Friday, Friday, October 10.

If you file by fax, the chief election officer must receive the originals by the end of the business day on Friday, October 17.

Other nominees, electors, and the chief election officer may challenge nominations and endorsements until Tuesday, October 14.

On Monday, October 20, the chief election officer will officially declare all nominees who have met the requirements as candidates for the Board of Education election.

CAMPAIGN FINANCING

School trustee candidates are governed by the same campaign financing rules as are local government candidates. They are found in the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act. Elections BC administers the campaign financing and



election advertising rules under the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act. The Local Elections Campaign Financing Act became law in 2014 and is available at [BC Laws](#).

Campaign financing rules are complex. They are described in more detail in Election BC's resource materials including the [Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in BC](#) and the [Third Party Sponsor Guide to Local Elections in BC](#).

CAMPAIGNING

Your election campaign may include:

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Interviews
- Door-to-door canvassing
- Mainstreeting: meeting voters in a public space
- Paid and unpaid media coverage
- Website/blog
- All-candidates' meetings

You will want to familiarize yourself with the campaign financing rules to ensure that your method of campaigning is in compliance with the rules.

Campaign resources include:

- [BCSTA](#)
- [School Trustee Election Procedures in British Columbia](#)
- [Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development](#)
- [Elections BC](#)
- [Civic info BC](#)
- [Local Elections Campaign Financing](#)

ALL-CANDIDATES' MEETINGS

In preparing for all-candidates' meetings and for campaigning generally, you should get used to following some of the practices that will serve you well as a school trustee.

Be sure that you understand the role of a school trustee. Attend Board of Education meetings, read school trustee publications and monitor the

media to gain an awareness of both regional and provincial issues in education. Ensure you know about other candidates and their positions.

All of this preparation will help you to form your own views and opinions on education issues to include in your campaign.

Here's [a list of some BC community newspapers](#). ■





Mark your calendars.

Mark your calendars! BCSTA's **Trustee Academy**, a professional development conference for school trustees, is taking place **December 4-6, 2014** in **Vancouver**.

Whether you are a new or returning school trustee, December 2014 marks the beginning of a brand new term for you and your Board. This year's **Trustee Academy**, with the theme *Board Governance: Characteristics of Effective Boards of Education*, will help prepare you for a successful term ahead.

Registration will open in the coming months, check the **BCSTA website** for updates!



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