



## Fact Sheet

### School Board Roles and Responsibilities

#### School board authority

Alberta school boards help shape the future of local communities by governing the education of young people. The provincial government, through the minister of learning grants school boards the independent 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 three years. The next election is October 18, 2004.

#### School board responsibilities

It's 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 the 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's 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, they have several roles to play:

## 2 0 0 4 S c h o o l B o a r d E l e c t i o n s

- **Communicators:** Trustees ensure the community has a say in what children learn by communicating effectively with stakeholders and ensuring their concerns and wishes are heard.
- **Planners:** Trustees develop plans to deal with student needs and to actively participate in the economic and social strength of local communities.
- **Policy Makers:** Trustees create policies to guide administration and staff. They also evaluate the impact of these policies and make adjustments where necessary.
- **Advocates:** Trustees address and seek resolution of public education issues of importance to students, parents, and the community at large.
- **Educators:** Trustees play a key role in developing tomorrow's citizens because they have the ability to make independent decisions that impact the direction and quality of public education.
- **Adjudicators:** Trustees hear and make judgements concerning local education decisions, procedures or policies that individuals, groups or the public feel are unfair or improper.
- **Lobbyists:** Trustees communicate with the municipal and provincial levels of government to ensure those who influence funding and other resources hear the voice of the local community.
- **Legislators:** Trustees can make decisions that have the status and impact of law -- for example, decisions governing and enforcing the conduct of students and staff.
- **Politicians:** Trustees are elected every three years to govern the local public education system on behalf of the community. The democratic process ensures the public remains part of public education.