

XYZ School Board
Protocol for Trustee Recognition
at School or Public Events

Introduction

Alberta voters have entrusted school boards with a high degree of responsibility. As with other elected officials, school board trustees are accountable for their actions to the citizens and communities who reside within their jurisdiction. The public expects school board trustees to be active in their communities and to be in touch with the public's concerns and issues.

Public events are a convenient way for trustees and the public to interact and communicate. Therefore, it's important trustees be consistently recognized at public events, in the same way that elected federal, provincial or municipal officials are recognized.

Trustees are responsible for large budgets and staffs, ensure public education is of a high quality and meets local needs, and perhaps most importantly play a key role in developing tomorrow's citizens. Recognition of trustees not only raises the profile of public education but also emphasizes its importance to the community-at-large.

Protocol Guidelines

Protocol varies from situation to situation, depending on the people involved and the individual event. However, as elected public officials, it is expected trustees will be introduced at events when they are present (and where politicians are to be recognized). School board staff and organizers of community functions should be made aware of the XYZ School Board's protocol expectations.

For events not organized by XYZ School Board or its schools

Attending public events strengthens ties with stakeholders and the community-at-large. Being part of the speaking program also provides trustees with an important opportunity to deliver key information and messages to a broad community audience. Therefore, School board trustees (with the assistance of staff) will make every effort to seek invitations to and/or attend significant community, organization, or public events. This may include annual meetings, open houses, business luncheons, trade or agricultural shows, fundraising events, holiday celebrations, etc. The school board's interest in attending such events will be communicated to community, social and business groups and organizations, municipalities, local MLAs and MPs.

Recognition

Once an invitation is extended and accepted, the following order for introducing guests* is suggested (if elected officials are to be recognized at the event):

1. Members of the senate representing Alberta
2. Members of Parliament (Cabinet ministers first)
3. Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (Cabinet ministers first)
4. Mayor or reeve
5. *School board chair*
6. *Councillors and trustees*
7. Other dignitaries (i.e. senior bureaucrats, heads of other organizations - e.g. Chamber of Commerce president).

Greetings

The most appropriate order of speakers will vary based on the type of event, number and nature of speakers, the keynote speaker, or the ceremony to be performed (if any). However, the following speaking order is suggested if a school board trustee is asked to bring greetings to an event:

1. Introductory remarks by Master of Ceremonies, including recognition of trustees* and other dignitaries in attendance
2. Blessing or grace
3. Greetings from representative of:
 - a. *School board*
 - b. Municipal government
 - c. Provincial government
 - d. Federal government
4. Keynote speaker or ceremony
5. Closing remarks, Master of Ceremonies

** Care should be taken to ensure names and positions are correct. Names should be spelled phonetically if necessary to help with pronunciation.*

For events organized by XYZ School Board or its schools

At least one school board trustee should be in attendance at significant jurisdiction or school events (e.g. graduation ceremonies, awards nights, community open-houses, orientation nights for parents, etc.). It is expected that event organizers will extend an invitation to all school board trustees to attend all such events.

Protocol for school board invitations is as follows:

1. Notify superintendent or board secretary of event details once they are finalized. Indicate if there is an opportunity/desire for greetings or a presentation to be provided by a trustee. Notification should occur at least two weeks prior to the event.
2. Superintendent or board secretary to prepare a briefing note on event outlining purpose, date, time, location, audience, and other key details. If a speaker is requested, information on desired presentation topic, other speakers, and time allotted is also to be provided.
3. Board chair and trustees notified with request for RSVP.
4. Speaker (if any) and trustee(s) attendance confirmed.
5. Event organizers notified and given list of names and titles of attendees (provide phonetic spellings of names if necessary). Proper protocol for order of introduction and speakers given at this time.
6. Details double-checked with organizers. Any changes communicated back to confirmed attendees/speaker.
7. Event organizers provide Master of Ceremonies with list and introduction notes regarding speaker (if applicable).
8. When a member of the school board is unable to attend: Master of Ceremonies to be instructed to express regrets on behalf of board (or individual trustee(s) who were specifically invited to attend).
9. There may be occasions when the presence of a trustee is uncertain. In these instances, the Master of Ceremonies should inquire whether there are any trustees present.

Recognition

At events organized or sponsored by the school board or its schools, it is appropriate to introduce and recognize school trustees before introducing and recognizing other elected officials or dignitaries who may be present. The following is the proper order of introduction of trustees and other dignitaries:

1. *Board chair*
2. *Vice-chair*
3. *Trustees in attendance*
4. *“Greetings/regrets” from trustees not in attendance*
5. *Clergy (if appropriate)*
6. *Superintendent, assistant, or deputy superintendents*
7. *School principal, vice-principal(s) (if school is hosting event)*

8. Other elected officials and dignitaries attending (highest to lowest rank):
 - i) Members of the Senate representing Alberta
 - ii) Members of Parliament (Cabinet ministers first)
 - iii) Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (Cabinet ministers first)
 - iv) Mayors, reeves
 - v) Other municipal councillors
 - vi) Other dignitaries

Greetings

As at community events, the most appropriate order of speakers will vary based on the type of event, number and nature of speakers, the keynote speaker or the ceremony to be performed (if any). However, the following speaking order is suggested if a school board trustee is asked to bring greetings to an event sponsored by the board or one of its schools:

1. Introductory remarks by Master of Ceremonies, including recognition of trustees and other dignitaries in attendance
2. Blessing or grace (if appropriate)
3. *Remarks from board chair, vice-chair or trustee representing school board*
4. Greetings from representative of:
 - a. Federal government
 - b. Provincial government
 - c. Municipal government
5. Superintendent, principal (if appropriate)
6. Event organizer representative.* (This person may be the superintendent, principal, school council president, student council president, etc.)
7. Keynote speaker or ceremony
8. Closing remarks, Master of Ceremonies

* This would be unnecessary if the school board is hosting the event. For example, if the event is staff long service awards.

Royal and Other Special Visits

While extremely rare, school boards or schools occasionally may be included in royal visits (including those of Canada's Governor-General and/or Alberta's Lieutenant-Governor); visits by the Prime Minister or Premier; senior cabinet ministers; ambassadors; or other prominent dignitaries. In such circumstances, the formal protocol of either the Government of Canada or Province of Alberta takes precedent. Information on proper protocol in these special circumstances can be obtained from the Government of Alberta.

In these circumstances, it is expected local event organizers will ensure local trustees are properly recognized and included in the event whenever possible.