



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #220.0, Trustee Services

Executive Summary

The Trustee Services policy and procedure outlines the provision of supports and services to support the Board of Trustees in their duties as publicly elected representatives governing public education in York Region.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy and Procedures:

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Chief Financial Officer
- Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services
- Corporate Communications
- Community Use of Schools Department
- Principals

Relationship to Board Priorities

The Trustee Services policy and procedure ensures the Stewardship of Board resources and outlines how the Board of Trustees will be supported so that they can carry out their legislated duties to support student and staff success and well-being and to ensure the delivery of effective and sustainable educational programs.

Legislative Context

[Education Act](#)

[Broader Public Sector Accountability Act](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term “parents” refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Policy #220.0 Trustee Services

Policy Statement

This policy outlines responsibilities associated with the provision of support to trustees so they may fulfill their duties as publicly elected representatives responsible for the governance of public education in York Region. The York Region District School Board values the importance of professional learning opportunities for trustees and supports interaction and communication among trustees, students, staff members, school communities and appropriate educational organizations.

Application

This policy applies to all trustees and staff members who support the Board in various capacities.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- fulfilling duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Education Act,
- upholding the implementation of any Board resolution after it is passed by the Board,
- entrusting the day-to-day management of the Board to its staff through the Director of Education,
- reviewing the Trustee Services policy and procedure in accordance with the priorities in the [Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle, and
- adhering to and communicating with members of the community about the Trustee Services policy and procedure.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- implementing and operationalizing the Trustee Services policy.

Definitions

Communication Expenses

Communication expenses are legitimate costs for equipment and related services used by trustees to ensure they are accessible to students, parents, staff and members of the community for the purpose of conducting Board business. They include, but are not limited to:

- residential high-speed internet;
- and
- one of the following cellular phone options;
 - a personal dedicated cellular phone and service plan, or
 - a Board-provisioned cellular phone and service plan.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Miscellaneous expenses may include, but are not limited to, mileage and other reasonable and legitimate expenses incurred while attending educational community, school and workplace events, public forums, and other functions that are directly related to the role of a trustee and furthering the business of the Board.

Professional Learning Expenses

Professional learning expenses may include, but are not limited to, registration fees, food, accommodation, parking and travel incurred while attending Board-related professional development activities.

Department

Director's Services, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services

History

Approved: 1996

Working Document: June 2014, December 2014, October 2017, December 2017, December 2019

Revision Drafted: May 27, 2020

Revised: 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2011, April 2015, June 2020



Board Procedure #220.0 Trustee Services

Procedure

This procedure outlines the responsibilities associated with supporting trustees in their capacity as publicly elected officials. It also defines the reimbursement of miscellaneous, professional learning and communications expenses incurred by trustees to further the business of the Board and fulfill their duties under the Education Act. This procedure also outlines provisions to facilitate trustee communications with their stakeholders.

Application

This procedure applies to all trustees and staff members who support the Board in various capacities.

Communication Tools

Each trustee is provided with communication tools to assist in the performance of their duties. Trustees are encouraged to use the Board-provisioned cellular phone plan based on negotiated rates with service providers. Each trustee is entitled to request reimbursement for residential high-speed internet up to a maximum total of \$100.00 per month. Trustees who chose not to obtain a Board-provisioned cellular phone and service plan may be eligible to receive an additional reimbursement of \$50.00 per month (maximum) for a dedicated personal cellular phone. All associated costs including, but not limited to, hardware, accessories, set-up, change penalties and monthly service plans are to be covered by this amount. Trustees are required to complete appropriate documentation certifying that they incur these expenses for Board business.¹

Trustees may be reimbursed a maximum of \$400.00 one time during a four-year term to cover the cost of purchasing a cellular phone or other telecommunication device dedicated to trustee business.²

Additional communication expenses incurred while performing trustee duties, such as, but not limited to, initial set-up fees for internet and long-distance charges on a cellular phone may be eligible for reimbursement. Trustees will be required to submit documentation (including original receipts) regarding additional communication expenses, including related rationale, for consideration and reimbursement, where applicable, using a monthly expense form. Expenses incurred in order to conduct Board business while away from home, such as, but not limited to, internet access at a hotel and long-distance charges, are eligible for reimbursement on the monthly expense form with appropriate documentation. Trustees should make every reasonable effort, including, but not limited to, arranging for an out of province cellular phone plan, to minimize communication expenses incurred while conducting Board business away from home.

Trustees will not be reimbursed for the cost of a dedicated trustee residential telephone line or for conducting personal business (including long distance charges) on any cellular phone or residential telephone line.³

Professional Growth and Learning

Trustees are encouraged to continuously explore opportunities for knowledge mobilization and participation in additional relevant professional growth and learning opportunities. Additional rationale must be provided for participation in professional learning opportunities outside of Ontario.

¹ Effective September 1, 2020

² Effective January 1, 2020

³ Effective September 1, 2020

Trustees who participate in workshops, courses, conferences and symposia for the purposes of professional growth and learning must submit the following to Chair's Committee for consideration:

- a rationale, including, but not limited to, the destination;
- learning objectives connected to Board goals and priorities including, but not limited to the [Multi-Year Plan](#);
- budget and funding; and
- opportunities for knowledge mobilization, where applicable and appropriate.

Chair's Committee will make a recommendation to the Board for approval.

Participation in jurisdictional learning opportunities must adhere to the [Jurisdictional Learning](#) policy and procedure.

A follow-up report must be completed as soon as possible and within three months for opportunities outside of Ontario.

Expenses will not be reimbursed for attendance at workshops, courses, conference, symposia, jurisdictional learning opportunities and other events outside of Ontario unless permissions has been granted by the Board prior to departure.

Board-supported Conferences: Participation Guidelines

Ontario Public School Boards' Association

Recognizing the important role the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) plays in public education in Ontario, trustee participation in conferences is supported financially as follows:

- Two trustees elected as the Board of Directors' Members, or in the absence of one or both the Alternate Board of Directors' Member(s) shall attend the Public Education Symposium (PES) and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to represent the Board;
- Each trustee may attend the PES during the first year of the four-year term of office. This provision applies only to year one of the four-year term of office and if unused cannot be applied to subsequent years;
- Each trustee may attend the PES or the AGM one additional time during years two, three or four of the four-year term of office;
- Any trustee elected to the Policy Work Team or the Education Program Team may attend the PES and the AGM the year(s) in which they are an official member; and
- Any trustee who is running for a position on the OPSBA Executive or who is an existing elected member of the Policy Work Team or the Education Program Team who is running for re-election may attend the AGM.

Expenses for trustee participation in OPSBA meetings and/or events in their capacity as an executive member or work group member, not covered by OPSBA, will be reimbursed by the Board and not charged against the Trustees' Professional Development allocation.

The costs associated with trustee participation in OPSBA conferences outlined above will be covered by the Board and not charged against the trustees' personal professional learning allocation.

Additional funds may be available for trustees to attend OPSBA conferences. All requests will be considered by Chair's Committee in order to ensure equitable allocation of funds among all trustees.

Trustees who chose to attend other OPSBA sponsored conferences that do not fall into the provisions outlined above, are responsible for the costs using their professional learning allocation or personal resources. Approval is not required by Chair's Committee for any trustee to attend OPSBA conferences or events; however, the [Application to Attend a Conference or Workshop](#) must be shared with the committee for information.

Canadian School Boards' Association

Networking with school board officials from within Canada is important to understanding the educational context across the country. Chair's Committee is not required to approve trustee attendance in Canadian School Boards' Association (CSBA) conferences or events *taking place within Ontario*; however, the [Application to Attend a Conference or Workshop](#) must be shared with the committee for information.

In accordance with this policy, approval is required for any CSBA conference or event *taking place outside of Ontario*. In accordance with Board policy, costs associated with trustee participation in CSBA conference or events may be eligible for reimbursement from the trustees' professional development allocation provided all approval, reporting and reimbursement requirements are met.

Responsibilities

Trustees shall:

- **with regard to all professional learning;**
 - have the opportunity to attend workshops, courses, conferences and symposia related to the governance of public education and the delivery of educational programs and services for students, staff members and the community in accordance with all Board policies and procedures,
 - with the exception of OPSBA and CSBA conferences and events, not participate in professional growth and learning opportunities during the municipal election campaign period,
 - ensure participation in OPSBA and CSBA conferences and events outside of Ontario during the municipal election period allows for sufficient time to report on learning through Chair's Committee prior to the end of the Term of Office,
 - submit the [Application to Attend a Conference or Workshop](#) to Chair's Committee for approval,
 - understand expenses associated with travel outside of Ontario will not be reimbursed unless Board approval was obtained prior to departure and until the follow-up report has been submitted to Chair's Committee;
 - submit expenses incurred while attending workshops, courses, conferences and symposia on the [Monthly Expense Report form](#), to the Director of Education in accordance with the [Travel, Meals and Hospitality Expenditures](#) policy and procedure and any other applicable Board policies and procedures,
 - attach a copy of the [Application to Attend a Conference, Convention or Workshop](#) with the Monthly Expense Report,
 - covering the cost of additional expenses, events or excursions not related to the professional learning opportunity,
 - understand that an allowance per four-year term of office (as approved at Board) is provided for trustees to participate in professional learning activities,
 - be aware that an additional allowance per annum is provided for the Board Chair and Vice-Chair for professional learning activities, and
 - obtain prior Board approval, through Chair's Committee, if expenditures of more than \$4,000.00 for trustees and \$5,000.00 (not to exceed the four-year allowance) for the Board Chair and Vice-Chair are required in any one calendar year for a professional learning activity.

- **with regard to professional learning outside of Ontario;**
 - submit the Application to Attend a Conference, Convention or Workshop to Chair's Committee a minimum of two months prior to departure,
 - prepare and submit a follow-up report to Chair's Committee for information as soon as possible and within three months that includes,
 - rationale and learning objectives connected to Board goals and priorities including, but not limited to the [Multi-Year Plan](#),
 - learning achieved,
 - a detailed itinerary,
 - budget and funding, and
 - recommendations for action.

- **with regard to participation in Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) events;**
 - adhere to the Board-supported Ontario Public School Boards' Association Conferences: Participation Guidelines,
 - elect the following trustee representatives at the December Board Meeting annually,
 - First Board of Directors' Member and Voting Delegate,
 - Second Board of Directors' Member and Alternate Voting Delegate, and
 - Two Alternate Board of Directors' Members,
 - if one or both of the Board of Directors' Members is/are unable to attend a Board of Directors' Meeting,
 - identify which elected Alternate Board of Directors' Member(s) will attend to represent the Board, or
 - in circumstances where the Alternate Board of Directors' Members are also unable to attend, approve, through Chair's Committee, up to two other trustees to represent the Board.
 - request, through Chair's Committee, access to additional funds to supplement the costs associated with attendance at OPSBA conferences, and
 - understand that access to funds to supplement the costs associated with attendance at OPSBA conference is conditional on budget and equitable distribution among requesting trustees.

- **with regard to participation in Canadian School Boards' Association (CSBA) events;**
 - adhere to the Board-supported Conferences: Participation Guidelines.

- **with regard to the reimbursement of expenses;**
 - adhering to prescribed limits regarding requests for reimbursement of miscellaneous, professional learning and communications expenses in accordance with all applicable Board policies, procedures, guidelines and legislation,
 - endeavour to keep all miscellaneous, communication and professional learning expenses to a minimum,
 - only submit for reimbursement expenses related to their own participation in workshops, courses, conference, symposiums, and business functions that are directly related to the role of a trustee and further the business of the Board,
 - submit to the Director of Education, on a monthly basis, all claims for necessarily incurred miscellaneous expenses including original itemized receipts in accordance with the Trustee Services policy,
 - submit to the Director of Education, as required, separate claims for reimbursement for professional learning expenses including original itemized receipts in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures,
 - request reimbursement of expenditures not covered within the framework of this policy and related procedure, for Board approval, through Chair's Committee,
 - submit for reimbursement, where applicable, expenses associated with participation in an eligible event as outlined in the Trustee Expenses Guideline, and
 - understand expenses associated with voluntary participation in Board social events are not eligible for reimbursement in accordance with the [Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive](#).

- **with regard to communications;**
 - communicating with the public through formal and informal meetings with staff members, parent groups and citizens, and also through other appropriate communication vehicles,
 - forwarding any requests for system data outside of the regular Board Committee framework to the Director of Education, Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services or Corporate Communications for consideration,
 - requesting information from the relevant superintendent regarding local school, workplace and community matters,
 - ensuring that official trustee letterhead is used solely for the purpose of communicating with constituents about Board-related matters,

- ensuring that official Board letterhead is used solely by the Board Chair for the purpose of communicating to constituents about Board-related matters on behalf of the Board; and
 - not distributing information to the school community within the six months prior to a municipal election in accordance with the [Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections Guideline](#).
- **with regard to communication expenses and tools;**
 - adhere to Canada Revenue Agency requirements with regard to reimbursement for communication expense reimbursement,
 - understand they are encouraged to use the Board-provisioned cellular phone plan based on negotiated rates with service provider,
 - ensure that all Board-provisioned information technology equipment is utilized in accordance with Board policies and procedures,
 - make all initial and ongoing arrangements with regard to cellular phone and/or other telecommunication device and services as outlined in the Trustee Services policy, where applicable,
 - understand that trustees who chose not to obtain a Board-provisioned cellular phone and service plan may be eligible to receive an additional reimbursement of \$50.00 per month (maximum) for a dedicated personal cellular phone. All associated costs including, but not limited to, hardware, accessories, set-up, change penalties and monthly service plans are to be covered by this amount. Trustees are required to complete appropriate documentation certifying that they incur these expenses for Board business,
 - submit for reimbursement, where applicable, the cost to purchase a cellular phone or other telecommunication device dedicated to trustee business, up to a maximum of \$400.00, once during the four-year term of office,
 - understand the cost of upgrading cellular phones or residential equipment during the trustees four-year term of office will be at their own cost, understand that each trustee is entitled to request reimbursement for residential high-speed internet up to a maximum total of \$100.00 per month,
 - understand that additional communication expenses incurred while performing trustee duties, such as, but not limited to, initial set-up fees for home phone and/or internet and long-distance charges on a personal home phone or cellular phone may be eligible for reimbursement. Trustees will be required to submit documentation (including original receipts) regarding additional communication expenses, including related rationale, for consideration and reimbursement, where applicable, using a monthly expense form. Expenses incurred in order to conduct Board business while away from home, such as, but not limited to, internet access at a hotel and long-distance charges, are eligible for reimbursement on the monthly expense form with appropriate documentation. Trustees should make every reasonable effort, including, but not limited to, arranging for an out of province cellular phone plan, to minimize communication expenses incurred while conducting Board business away from home,
 - understand that Trustees will not be reimbursed for the cost of a dedicated trustee residential telephone line or for conducting personal business (including long distance charges) on any cellular phone or residential telephone line, and
 - complete the Internet Expenses Reimbursement Request Form and the Trustee Cellular Phone Expense Reimbursement Request Form, at the beginning of the four-year term of office, and as required throughout the term, to receive reimbursement for communications expenses in accordance with the Trustee Services policy and procedure.
 - **when considering the use of a school or Board facility to host a meeting or event;**
 - request the use of a school or Board facility through Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services,
 - ensure the purpose of the meeting or event is related to student/community/education issues affecting the school community,
 - understand that requests will not be approved within the six months prior to a municipal election,

- ensure that information associated with the meeting or event is distributed in consultation with Corporate Communications and in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures, and
- work with Corporate Communications and Inclusive Schools and Community Services to seek advice, protocols, and support in planning of meetings and events.
- **consult with Corporate Communications regarding;**
 - responses to specific incidents or emergent issues that may result in significant public interest or concern,
 - messaging to families and communities regarding board priorities, initiatives and matters related to intergovernmental relations/initiatives,
 - school and public events when providing greetings on behalf of the Board,
 - requests from outside organizations to promote, publicize or engage in events and/or initiatives,
 - training and support with traditional and social media as related to their role, group communications to principals or other staff groups, and
 - trustee information for school newsletters or any large-scale communication to constituents.

The Chair of the Board (or designate) shall:

- **with regard to involvement in activities or events outside of Ontario as an official representative of the Board of Trustees;**
 - schedule requests for involvement at a Chair's Committee for consideration prior to confirming participation,
 - identify, in conjunction with Chair's Committee, a designate to attend on their behalf, as required,
 - have the costs associated with participation covered by the Board and not out of personal professional development funds, and
 - prepare and present a follow-up to Chair's Committee as soon as possible, and within three months.

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the Trustee Services procedure.

Chair's Committee shall:

- recommend to the Board for approval trustee requests for participation in professional learning opportunities; and
- ensure the mandatory follow-up report is completed as soon as possible and within three months by trustees who participated in professional learning opportunities outside of Ontario.

The Chief Financial Officer shall:

- **with regard to trustee professional learning;**
 - provide an allowance of \$8,490.00 per four-year term of office (as approved at Board) for trustees to participate in professional learning activities,
 - allocate additional funds in the Budget to support trustee participation in Board-supported Ontario Public School Boards' Association Conferences,
 - ensure costs associated with two trustees attending Board of Directors' Meetings as the Board's representative, not covered by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, are reimbursed in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures,
 - adjust the allowance for professional learning activities by the consumer price index at the beginning of each four-year term,
 - ensure that the maximum amount of professional learning claims, per trustee, in any calendar year does not exceed \$4,000.00 for trustees and \$5,000.00 (not to exceed the four-year allowance) for the Board Chair and Vice-Chair without Board approval,

- provide an additional allowance of \$1,061.00 per annum to the Board Chair and Vice-Chair for professional learning activities,
 - track applications, costs and reports related to professional learning outside of Ontario,
 - allocate additional funds within the budget annually to finance trustee registration fees and all related expenses to attend workshops, courses and symposiums hosted by the York Region District School Board,
 - allocate additional funds within the budget annually to finance trustee attendance at conferences and meetings where trustees are acting in their capacity as voting and/or executive members of Board-approved educational associations,
 - reimburse trustees for miscellaneous and professional learning expenses incurred while furthering the business of the Board and carrying out their responsibilities as publicly elected representatives;
 - not reimburse expenses for travel outside of Ontario unless the trustee can demonstrate Board approval was granted prior to departure and the follow-up report has been submitted to Chair's Committee; and
 - provide an annual report to the Board regarding trustee professional learning expenses.
- **with regard to communication expenses and tools;**
 - budget and allocating funds for trustee communication expenses,
 - arrange for the selection, provision, set up and maintenance of information technology for trustees for Board business purposes,
 - allocate additional funds within the budget once per four-year election period to reimburse trustees for a one-time purchase of a cellular phone and/or other telecommunication device, up to a maximum of \$400.00 per trustee per term,
 - process a monthly payment to each trustee to cover the cost of all communication expenses and equipment as outlined in the Trustee Services policy, and
 - consider whether the monthly amount (including taxes) allocated to trustees for communication expenses and equipment should be adjusted by the consumer price index at the beginning of each four-year term.
- **with regard to other financial matters;**
 - ensuring that trustees receive the Board-approved honoraria, in accordance with provincial regulation; and
 - facilitating reimbursement to trustees for expenditures not covered within the framework of this policy and related procedure that are approved by specific Board resolution.

The Community Use of Schools Department shall:

- where appropriate, work with Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services and Corporate Communications to facilitate the use of schools for meetings organized, facilitated or arranged by trustees in response to student, community, or educational issues affecting the school community.

Principals shall:

- distribute, as part of their school newsletters, Board information from school trustees when requested to do so, provided that this does not occur within the six months prior to a municipal election.

Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services shall:

- **with regard to administrative support for trustees;**
 - provide a reasonable level of administrative, research and service to support the Board of Trustees,
 - provide Board members (trustees) with official trustee letterhead and business cards to be used for the purpose of communicating with constituents about Board and student-related matters,
 - provide the Board Chair only with official Board letterhead and business cards, which shall be used exclusively by the Chair in communicating on behalf of the Board,
 - ensure that trustee contact information is available to members of public and all staff members,

- provide trustees with reasonable levels of administrative, research and support services, including, but not limited to, drafting resolutions, providing access to information in accordance with the Trustee Services policy, where appropriate, and researching existing Board documents,
 - facilitate the attendance of trustees at workshops, courses, conferences and symposia which are related to the governance of education and the delivery of educational programs and services that support students, staff members and the community,
 - for professional learning outside of Ontario, forward a copy of trustees' Monthly Expense Report forms with a copy of the follow-up report to the Chief Financial Officer, and
 - ensure that trustees' access to information is governed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other relevant legislation, and
 - manage requests from individual trustees for system data or other specific information outside the regular Board Committee framework in conjunction with the Director of Education and Corporate Communications.
- **reimbursement of trustee expenses;**
 - review trustee expense claims and ensure that they are reasonable, legitimate and in compliance with all applicable Board policies, procedures, guidelines and the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act,
 - ensure that Board approval was granted and the mandatory follow-up report has been submitted to Chair's Committee prior to submission of trustee expenses for travel outside of Ontario for the purposes of professional growth and learning;
 - schedule and review the annual report to the Board regarding trustee professional development expenses that are reimbursed through Board funds, and
 - schedule, through Chair's Committee, requests from trustees to exceed the per annum limit of \$4,000.00 for trustees and \$5,000.00 for the Chair and Vice-Chair for professional learning expenses for consideration and Board approval.
- **with regard to trustee communication expenses and tools;**
 - arrange for and support trustees' use of Board-owned information technology equipment during their term of office, and
 - upon completion of the four-year term of office,
 - provide all trustees with an opportunity to purchase Board-provisioned information technology at a depreciated market value on the condition that all Board-specific software is removed, or
 - ensure that all Board-owned information technology equipment, declined for purchase, is returned in proper working condition.

Definition

Knowledge Mobilization

The ongoing communication, integration and reporting of new knowledge before, during and after the professional development opportunity. The process brings new knowledge into and throughout the organization.

History

Approved: 2005

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