

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION
“Dedicated to the Pursuit of Excellence”



Board Policy

Manual

Updated November 26, 2024



PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION

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BOARD POLICY #1 Vision, Mission and Values

Vision:

The Portage la Prairie School Division is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the provision of appropriate schooling opportunities for its students.

Mission:

The mission of The Portage la Prairie School Division is to recognize the individual needs and potential of our students and to provide these students with the opportunity to undertake schooling experiences that will contribute to the development of their full potential. Schooling experiences will give consideration to the future demands that will be placed upon our society by our rapidly changing world.

Values:

The following values have been identified as a high priority and are therefore expected to be incorporated into the decision making and behaviour of the staff and students of The Portage la Prairie School Division:

- Honesty
- Dignity
- Cooperation
- Equity
- Commitment
- Compassion



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BOARD POLICY #2 Governance Model

Board Governance

The Board operates as a unified body and, as the elected leader of the School Division, it promotes and reinforces the goals of student learning and student well-being. The role of the Board is governance. The Board provides leadership by setting goals, making informed decisions, and ensuring that its Policy Manual is current, relevant and adhered to. The Board’s collective contribution is vital in its guidance and leadership of the School Division. Individual trustees contribute as capable governors within the Board.

Policy Leadership as a Governance Model

The Board provides leadership for the School Division. In accordance with the Public Schools Act, **only** the Board can adopt new policies or revise existing ones. Policies are clearly worded and re-examined regularly to ensure that the desired results are being achieved within the School Division.

Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that they possess the necessary framework for senior administration to demonstrate achievement of the goals established by the Board and to hold the Superintendent accountable for compliance with Board policies.

The School Division is committed to following a leadership model that:

- focuses on and is dedicated to effective governance;
- focuses on high level decisions rather than the details of daily activities and operations;
- delegates administrative and managerial authority to the Superintendent, excluding those exemptions defined in Board policy;
- annually approves a divisional operating budget consistent with priorities and goals defined in Board policies and the Board’s Strategic Plan;
- establishes procedures for evaluating Board policy compliance and ties this to the performance evaluation of the Board and the Superintendent;
- reassesses its vision and mission and realigns policies as necessary in response to community engagement and input as well as to ongoing advice provided by educational and pedagogical experts; and
- provides for continuous improvement through the support of professional development for the Board and senior administration.

By practicing effective governance, the Board ensures that policy remains the foundation for action and decision-making within the School Division.



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BOARD POLICY #3 Role of the Board

The Board will ensure that its stated motto, vision, mission and values, are reflected within the actions of the School Division.

Board Member Authority

Because all powers of the Board lie in its action as a group, individual trustees exercise their authority over division affairs only as they vote to take action at a legal meeting of the Board. In all other instances, an individual trustee, including the chairperson, shall have power only when the Board, by policy or motion, has delegated authority to them.

Areas of Responsibility:

Educational Accountability

The Board is responsible for setting the educational goals of the School Division and for reviewing how well students learn. The goals for educational excellence shall grow out of the School Division’s Mission statement and may include individual goals for specific administrators and schools.

Fiscal Responsibility

- The Board approves the annual budget and establishes the local property tax levy.
- The Board appoints the auditor for the School Division.
- The Board receives the audit report and ensures that quality indicators are in place.
- The Board ratifies and ensures the administration of collective agreements with any locally bargained employee groups.
- The Board approves the School Division’s annual five-year capital plan for submission to the Province of Manitoba.

Community Leadership

- The Board is visible within the communities it serves.
- The Board makes decisions that reflect the values and anticipated educational needs of the communities through community engagement.
- Trustees show their support of school and divisional activities through attendance at division and school events.

Accountability to the Provincial Government

The Board is responsible for adherence to all governing legislation, regulations and directives.

Accountability to the Community

- The Board reports School Division results to the community, as mandated by the provincial government.



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BOARD POLICY #3 Role of the Board

- The Board encourages the involvement of parents and guardians in the education of their children and responds appropriately to their concerns.
- The Board develops, maintains, and communicates appeal procedures regarding decisions of administration.
- The Board actively engages with community organizations and agencies that can contribute towards building support for public education.
- The Board approves the annual school calendar and length of the school day.
- The Board grants final approval for the acquisition or construction of division-owned facilities irrespective of resources made available by the Province.
- The Board retains adequate insurance to protect the assets of the School Division.

Appointment of Senior Administration

The Board appoints the Superintendent, determines their remuneration, and defines their duties. Additionally, the Board approves the hiring and assignment of all administrators, principals, directors and managers.

Board Succession Planning

The Board ensures that new trustees receive an orientation to their role within the School Division and provides the opportunity for new trustees to attend orientation programs delivered by the Manitoba School Boards Association.

Board Education and Evaluation

All trustees participate in training and educational opportunities that enhance Board and trustee development.

The Board annually evaluates board effectiveness through monitoring of goals, policies and board operations. Evaluation includes processes and tools that evaluate the Board as a team and provide for the self-evaluation of individual trustees.



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BOARD POLICY #4 Strategic Planning and Indicators of Success

The Board develops a strategic plan that identifies specific actions and directions that will contribute to the achievement of the vision and mission of the School Division. The plan will be constructed using SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound. Although an annual cycle will be appropriate for most goals, longer periods may be required for Board priorities that will encompass significant change and/or achievement over many years. The Board and senior administration conduct annual planning sessions in order to establish strategic priorities for the School Division. The Board considers input from individual trustees, senior administration and any other relevant sources. These strategic priorities direct the development of an annual plan in collaboration with senior administration to identify specific activities designed to achieve the strategic priorities established by the Board. The plan is reviewed and approved by the Board and forms the basis for annual budget preparation. The annual plan will be integrated within the Board’s Annual Planning Cycle (Policy #5) to facilitate continuous reporting by senior administration on activities, processes and indicators of success in all identified priority areas.

Indicators of Success

The Board will monitor the effectiveness of the strategic plan through reports provided under the direction of the Superintendent throughout the year. While the Superintendent will determine the scheduling and specificity of reports, the Board may at any time, by motion, call for the preparation and presentation of a report on a specific issue or area of Board interest.

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PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION ANNUAL PLANNING CYCLE

♦ SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

- ♦ Inaugural Board Meeting
- ♦ Summarize Community Engagement
- ♦ Continuous Improvement Plan Review

♦ NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- ♦ Strategic Plan Review - SWOT Analysis
- ♦ Initial Budget Planning

♦ JULY/AUGUST

- ♦ Board and Superintendent Evaluations

♦ JANUARY/FEBRAURY

- ♦ Budget Development
- ♦ Budget Consultations with PAC
- ♦ Public Budget Consultations
- ♦ Report to the Community

♦ MAY/JUNE

- ♦ Develop/ Review Strategic Plan
- ♦ Approve Strategic Plan
- ♦ Community Engagement

♦ MARCH/APRIL

- ♦ Budget submission
- ♦ Annual Meeting with City/RM





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BOARD POLICY #6 Board Operations

Board Operating Procedures

Board Operating Procedures are directive and precise in specifying how a particular aspect of Board governance will occur.

Bylaws

Board Bylaws are prescriptive in nature and are created when the Board is required by legislation or chooses to entrench a procedure that cannot be easily changed. Board Bylaws can only be adopted or amended by motion through a process that requires three formal “readings”. The intent of this process is to ensure that opportunities for full discussion of the matter under consideration are provided in open board meetings and that there is sufficient time available to prepare for any potential changes that may be enacted by the Bylaw.

Board Operating Procedures and Bylaws are found under this title on the Division website.



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BOARD POLICY #7 Conflict of Interest

Policy

Trustees will act at all times in the best interest of the school division, fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations as elected officials in a fashion that inspires the confidence and trust in their integrity objectivity and impartiality of the school board.

Trustees will abide by the provisions of all federal, provincial and local legislation, including but not limited to human rights states, and *The Public Schools Act*, as well as school division by-laws and policies. For the purposes of this policy, trustees will abide by legislation set out in Sections 36 – 39 of *The Public Schools Act*.

Definition

A conflict of interest exists when an individual trustee’s financial interests, or those of family members or close personal associates, interfere with or compromise the trustee’s ability to act in the best interests of the school division and constituents who it serves. Such conflict can **be real, potential or perceived**.

In addition to the provisions of *The Public Schools Act* concerning monetary conflicts of interest trustees are also considered to be in conflict of interest in the following situations:

- When they appropriate financial or other resources for personal use (e.g. information, equipment, supplies, transportation, training, staff time) outside normal division business unless authorized by the Chair; and
- When they use division-assigned email accounts and/or division logos while campaigning for election.



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BOARD POLICY #8 Code of Conduct

The Board has established a code of conduct for trustees in accordance with the provisions of *The Public Schools Act* (PSA) sections 35.1(1) and 35.1(2).

This code of conduct is an agreement between the organization and individual board trustees that identifies the standards of behaviour and accountability expected of trustees.

Trustee Responsibilities

Act with Integrity and Dignity of Office

- Recognize that they have a responsibility to the students, parents and guardians in the school system, employees and the communities that they serve.
- Discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner that inspires public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board.
- Commit themselves to dignified, ethical, professional and lawful conduct.
- Recognize that the expenditure of School Division funds is a public trust and ensure that the funds are expended effectively and efficiently, in the best interests of the students.

Comply with Regulatory and School Division Requirements

- Adhere to the provisions of all federal, provincial and local legislation including, but not limited to, those identified in the Introduction to the Board Policy Manual as well as to all Board Policies, Operating Procedures and Bylaws.

Comply with Authorities

- Recognize that the Board’s authority rests with the corporate body, not with individual trustees.
- Accept the Chair as the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board.
- Accept that no other trustee speaks on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized to do so by the Board Chair.

Uphold Decisions

- Uphold Board Motions.
- Be prepared to explain the rationale for a motion passed by the Board.
- Recognize that a motion passed by the Board may be reversed by Board motion.

Respect Confidentiality

- Understand that trustees may be privy to confidential information about individuals including students or staff, or financial or other sensitive matters, and must keep any such information confidential unless authorized by law or by the Board.



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BOARD POLICY #8 Code of Conduct

Actively Participate and Make Informed Decisions

- Prioritize and accept responsibility to attend all regular and special meetings of the Board and those committees on which they serve, and if unable to do so, advise the Secretary-Treasurer and Board Chair by email or phone of their pending absence at least two hours prior to the start of the meeting.
- Recognize that unexcused absences from regular and special meetings may result in removal from office, as stipulated in the PSA, or in the loss of a portion of the trustee’s annual indemnity, as stipulated by the Board.

Full Participation Requirements

- Virtual attendance: Adhere to expectations for conduct, attire, and engagement in virtual board meetings the same as in-person meetings. Utilize participation strategies including leaving the camera on throughout the meeting (if bandwidth permits) and actively participating in discussion. Trustees must ensure that the environment they are joining from is suitable for confidentiality and upholds the decorum of the board.
- Safeguard the confidentiality of all documents and email activities that are recorded automatically by the School Division’s domain, including the opening and editing of documents.
- All Meetings: Review meeting agendas and other relevant information prior to board and committee meetings and be prepared to contribute to an open and honest discussion of matters before the Board or committee.
- Listen respectfully and with an open mind to the full range of opinions on each matter before the Board, and make decisions based on the merits of evidence presented.
- Make decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment.
- Keep informed about current education issues by individual study and through participation in continuing education programs.

Behave Respectfully

- Engage in conduct that demonstrates the integrity of the Board at all times.
- Treat trustee colleagues, divisional and school staff, students and community members in a respectful and courteous manner, and refrain from using abusive or denigrating language in any dealings with them.
- Refrain from expressing opinions and/or sharing information through social media that would discredit, undermine or compromise the integrity of the Board.
- Refrain from initiating or participating in discussions of board business with other trustees (whether in person or via electronic means) when such discussions should rightly take place at an official school board meeting.



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BOARD POLICY #8 Code of Conduct

Relationship Bias

The Board supports the rights of trustees to be involved in community projects and activities as citizens of the community. Trustees:

- will work in the best interest of the School Division and set aside opposing interests of the other organizations or agencies of which they are a part;
- do not represent the Board in any official capacity unless requested by the Board to do so;
- shall not discuss confidential Board or School Division business outside of Board meetings including with family members, dependents and close associates who work for or attend classes in the school division;
- shall avoid relationship bias, whether real, potential or perceived, as outlined in Policy #7 Conflict of Interest;
- shall refrain from accepting a gift from any person or entity that has dealings with the Board if it could be perceived that the gift could influence the trustee when performing their duties to the Board; and
- shall respectfully acknowledge that exchanges of gifts and tokens are permitted in association with cultural ceremonies and customary traditions.

Use of School Division Property

- School Division property, including vehicles, equipment and material, are used primarily for carrying out School Division business.
- The Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer may authorize the use of supplies or equipment if they feel that such use will assist trustees in their assigned work for the School Division. It may be required that some staff and trustees regularly retain district-owned supplies or equipment in their possession.
- A written record of the authorization of the use of supplies or equipment is maintained indicating the time of release, the signature of the user, and the date on which the item is returned
- Trustees are responsible for exercising all reasonable care to prevent abuse to, excessive wear of, or loss of district-owned equipment or material entrusted to their care.

While actively campaigning for election, the following activities are prohibited and are considered a conflict of interest under the provisions of Policy #7.

- Division-owned resources may not be used other than to carry out School Division related business.
- Use of School Division trademarks and logos are not permitted in campaign material.
- Use of trustee divisional email accounts are not permitted in campaign correspondence or advertising.

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BOARD POLICY #8 Code of Conduct

Involvement with External Organizations

Trustees must be cognizant of the potential conflict that exists when serving as members of any organization (whether school or community based) that may from time to time make a request of the Board. This includes Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), Recreation Commissions, MB Rural Learning Consortia, sports leagues, clubs, or other organizations with potential connections to the Division.

If a trustee is a member, officiant, or otherwise involved with any other organization that may have like interests to those of the School Division they:

- may not appear as part of the organization’s delegation or take part in any formal presentation the organization may make to the Board;
- are recused from any discussion or vote on the matter involving that organization and shall immediately leave the room; and
- may not remain in the meeting as an observer.

Breaches of the Code

Prescribed procedures for dealing with perceived or actual breaches of the Code are found in **Board Operating Procedures and Bylaw**.



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BOARD POLICY #9 Policy Development

A primary role of the Board is the development, adoption, monitoring and revision of policy.

Identification of Areas for Policy Development

Recommendations for consideration of policy development or revision may come to the Board from a variety of sources including individual trustees, board committees, senior administrators, division personnel, the public, students and Provincial or Federal governments.

Process for Policy Development

Once the Board has determined that policy development is required, the following process will be initiated:

1. The draft policy is developed by senior administration and presented to the Board for review and discussion.
2. With approval of the Board, senior administration or a committee of the Board may seek public consultation and input in the development of the policy.
3. The draft policy is brought to the full Board for review, revision and approval.

Board Approval Criteria

As a final step before approving a new or revised policy, the Board will consider the following three questions

1. Does the policy clearly communicate the Board’s intent?
2. Does the policy articulate the Board’s instructions to senior administration in such a way as to allow senior administrators an acceptable range of options for implementation?
3. How will this policy be monitored?

Policy Dissemination

Once a policy has been developed or revised and approved by the Board, it will be distributed to all staff via division e-mail, placed on the division website and a hard copy maintained by senior administration in the division office.

Monitoring and Reviewing Policy

The Board believes that in order to maintain a strong and relevant school system, it needs to review School Division policies on a continual basis in an effort to ensure that they are compliant with all relevant legislation, consistent with community values, and meeting the needs of all students. All policies will be reviewed annually by the Board or a committee of the Board which will formally report the results of its review to the Board.

Government-Mandated Policies

In addition to the myriad of legislative requirements identified in the Introduction to the Board Policy Manual, Government may, from time to time, direct that Boards create or adopt specific policies or procedures to address topical issues. These directives will be addressed in Administrative Procedures.



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BOARD POLICY #10 Board and Superintendent Relationship, Evaluation and Contingency Planning

The Superintendent is employed as Chief Executive Officer under a written contract with the Board and shall be responsible for the management, under the Board's policies, of all sectors of the school system. The Board's sole official connection to the operations of the School Division, its achievements, and conduct of staff and students will be through the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the Board is fully informed, supported and protected in its work.

The Superintendent shall work collaboratively with the Board, individual trustees, senior administration, government stakeholders, community, parents, guardians, staff and students to best serve the needs of all students.

The Superintendent is directly accountable to the Board. The Superintendent shall have the authority to delegate to other division personnel the exercise of some powers and the discharge of some duties imposed upon the Superintendent by Board policies or by resolution of the Board. The Superintendent is responsible for the action taken under such delegation.

Official directives to the Superintendent shall be through Board motion. The Superintendent is authorized to establish administrative procedures, make all decisions, and take all actions within the policy parameters established by the Board.

Decisions and instructions from individual trustees are not binding on the Superintendent. In the case of trustees or committees requesting information or assistance without Board authorization, the Superintendent may refuse requests that, in the opinion of the Superintendent, require significant amounts of staff time or funds, or are disruptive to the goals of the division. Trustees may refer a formal request to the Board for consideration.

The Superintendent is responsible for the actions of the staff of the School Division. The Board or individual trustees do not provide direction to people who report directly or indirectly to the Superintendent and shall refrain from evaluating, either formally or informally, any staff other than the Superintendent.

Superintendent Evaluation

- The evaluation of the Superintendent shall be carried out by the Board and/or a committee so directed by the Board. The evaluation shall be based on established criteria and guidelines which are known in advance to both the Superintendent and the Board.
- The Superintendent shall be formally evaluated annually.
- The results of the evaluation shall be provided in writing to the Superintendent within 30 days of the completion of the evaluation.

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BOARD POLICY #10 Board and Superintendent Relationship, Evaluation and Contingency Planning

Contingency Planning

In order to protect the Board and the School Division from the sudden loss of CEO services, the Superintendent will ensure that at least one other school division senior administrator is familiar with matters of the Board and Superintendent, including the principles of policy leadership and good governance. In this manner, the Board will ensure that provisions are in place to allow for the timely continuation of senior administrative services in the event of a crisis resulting in the Superintendent being unable to fulfill their duties. Similarly, it is incumbent upon the Superintendent to develop and maintain up-to-date plans for dealing with foreseeable loss that may impact school or division operations. The review of these plans will be conducted and reported to the Board by the Superintendent as part of the School Division’s risk management strategy.

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BOARD POLICY #11 Board and Superintendent/CEO Limitations/Decision Making Matrix

The Portage la Prairie School Division operates legally, ethically, prudently, and in accordance with Board policies. Within their dually shared Senior Administrative responsibilities to the Board, the Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO provides the board with continuous reports.

Decisions made at the Board and Senior Administration level incorporate all aspects of the Portage la Prairie School Division Policy Manual, *The Public Schools Act (PSA)*, *The Safe Schools Charter of Manitoba*, *The Education Administration Act*, and any other federal, provincial, or municipal law.

Board Decision – In consultation with Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO	Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO – has the authority to decide and act and must inform the Board	Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO – has the authority to decide, act and delegate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Divisional Priorities • Policy development and approval • Hiring and Evaluation of Superintendent /Secretary-Treasurer/CEO • Selection and Appointment of School Principals/Vice-Principals • Employee Compensation and Benefits – Collective Agreements, Senior Administration and Non-Unionized employment contracts • Approve the budget and special levy • Receive and adjudicate appeals from Students, Parents, the Public, and Employees • Teacher terminations as outlined in the PSA (92) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information relevant to developing Divisional priorities • Report significant revisions, additions, or deletions to administrative procedures, including topics that may be controversial that the Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO deems central to the work of the Trustees • Staff suspensions and administrative leaves • Professional development for senior administration • Evaluate all Divisional programs and report on student data • Emergency school closures • Serious Incidents (bus accidents/chemical spills/lockdown etc.) and Public Health Situations • New programming and the elimination of existing programming • Suspension Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer Collective Agreements • Implement Board Policy • Administrative Procedures • Personnel- Approval of Employment Recommendations, Transfers/Reassignments/Leaves, Resignation/Redeployment, (Professional Staff, Support Staff, and Non-Unionized Staff) • Supervise and evaluate staff • Plan and develop Educational Systems that align with Division Priorities • Manage all matters relative to labour relations • Suspend students for up to six weeks (Regulation 92/2013 (8)) • Preparation and management of the Divisional Operational Budget • Workplace Safety and Health Operations and Safety Complaints • Communication with Parents/Guardians, Stakeholders and the Media • Professional Development Programs • Orientations – New Employee/Newly Elected Board of Trustees



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**BOARD POLICY #11 Board and Superintendent/CEO
 Limitations/Decision Making Matrix**

Board Decision – In consultation with Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO

Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO – has the authority to decide and act and must inform the Board

Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer/CEO – has the authority to decide, act and delegate

- Approve the Division organizational chart
- Approve tenders over the provincial threshold as outlined in the PSA (70)
- Approve over-budget expenditures (including additional staffing)
- Approve annual audited financial statements
- Approve acquiring or disposing of divisional land and buildings
- Approve student travel out of province over four days and International travel
- Build community relationships by attending relevant meetings and sharing board messages
- Provide the public with direction when they have concerns
- Approve student expulsions
- Corporate sponsorships

- Staffing levels
- Staff requests for leaves outside of the collective agreement
- Set the Division’s facility management goals, action plans and procedures
- Approve 5-Year Capital Plan
- School Calendar
- Personnel Investigations
- Public and Employee Concerns and Complaints
- Legislation Changes and Divisional Actions
- Financial Reports
- Divisional grant applications



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BOARD POLICY #12 Learning Environment, Programs and Services

The Board is responsible for public education K-12 throughout the School Division according to provincial guidelines. The School Division follows the Manitoba curriculum for all programming and schools offer the entire core curriculum as well as optional components.

In support of the Division’s stated motto, vision, mission and values, the Board is committed to the development and maintenance of equitable, effective, engaging and caring learning communities.

The Superintendent is responsible for:

- ensuring that programs and services are in compliance with provincial requirements;
- ensuring that all schools provide a continuum of services through a divisional framework that supports the learning needs of all students;
- implementing assessment and evaluation practices that:
 - ensure the achievement of provincial, divisional and school goals;
 - foster an effective and efficient school system; and
 - promote growth and improvement.
- establishing administrative procedures to maintain safe and effective environments for all students and staff;
- establishing a dispute resolution process to be followed if there is disagreement about the appropriateness of the educational programming being provided to students;
- taking appropriate action with staff, students or volunteers who demonstrate behaviors or actions that threaten the academic progress and/or well-being of students;
- ensuring a culture characterized by mutual respect;
- ensuring that any religious exercise or instruction is conducted in accordance with the provisions of sections 80 – 84 of the Public Schools Act; and
- ensuring off-site activities (athletic and educational) are an extension of classroom instruction and that such activities are linked to curriculum, division and school plans.

The Superintendent shall not tolerate practices within the School Division that conflict with provincial requirements or Board policy, are not consistent with sound pedagogy, or jeopardize the safety and well-being of students or staff.



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BOARD POLICY #13 Safe and Respectful Schools

The School Division accepts its responsibility to foster and maintain a safe, caring, respectful and inclusive school environment for its students, staff, and community. The Board expects that schools and workplaces are directed to focus on safety and responsible citizenship based on the School Division’s values and the legislative requirements of Canada and the Province of Manitoba. Specifically, the *Public Schools Act* states that every school board shall ensure that each pupil within their jurisdiction “*is provided with a safe and caring school environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours*”. [Sec. 41(1) (b.1)]

The Board is committed to working in collaboration with all of its education partners to ensure and enhance the safety of the School Division’s schools and school communities.

The Superintendent shall:

- ensure that the administrative procedures, operations and practices implemented in the School Division are compliant with federal and provincial legislative requirements as found in, but not limited to, the legislation identified in the Introduction to this Policy Manual;
- ensure that each principal will establish a code of conduct for pupils and staff and shall inform the Parent Advisory Council or its equivalent;
- ensure that each principal will establish an emergency response plan for the school and shall inform the Parent Advisory Council or its equivalent;
- ensure that each school’s code of conduct and emergency response plan are communicated appropriately and submitted to senior administration annually;
- ensure that the School Division and each school has a critical incident response plan and threat assessment protocol;
- ensure that the use of technology by staff and students is responsible and supports student learning and digital citizenship; and
- ensure that staff are appropriately trained, through approved professional development opportunities, in how to foster safe and respectful schools.



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BOARD POLICY #14 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

For the Portage La Prairie School Division to achieve its mission statement of recognizing “the individual needs and potential of our students and” providing “these students with the opportunity to undertake schooling experiences that will contribute to the development of their full potential”, we must view our work through the lenses of diversity, equity and inclusion. Our goal must be equitable outcomes for all children, not just the provision of opportunity with the consequence of differential outcomes. We must acknowledge the challenges to equity posed by, but not limited to, negative life experiences, poverty, racism, disability, sexism and homophobia and assist children in meeting these challenges.

The Portage La Prairie School Division is committed to supporting diversity by ensuring a safe, positive and respectful learning environment for the entire learning community, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ children, students, families, staff, teachers and early childhood educators. This respects the letter and spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and The Manitoba Human Rights Code. Guided by **Safe and Inclusive Schools** legislation, our schools are proactive in developing and implementing guidelines that support safe and inclusive learning environments.

We recognize that everyone in the Portage La Prairie School Division will benefit from Indigenous education as it enriches the experiences of all learners while supporting academic success for Indigenous learners. It serves to engage all stakeholders, parents, community, schools and staff in initiatives that work to naturally weave the recommendations from the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents position statement on Aboriginal Education (2011, 2013), the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the Canadian Council of Learning (2009) on Redefining Success for Aboriginal Learners, and Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With (2022).

Furthermore, the Portage La Prairie School Division recognizes that every individual in their community has the right to a learning environment that is free from racism, hatred, bigotry and religious persecution. Achieving equity in our school division requires that we explicitly oppose racial discrimination in all forms. We acknowledge that by not actively challenging racism we allow for it to continue and perpetuate itself. By incorporating rich anti-racist teaching and learning into our classrooms and enhancing racial diversity in all areas of school life, we can strive toward establishing equitable and anti-racist school environments where everyone can feel safe and empowered.

Adherence to this policy is a requirement for all Portage La Prairie School Division trustees, employees and individuals providing any type of service or engaging in any type of interaction with our students. Adherence to the Code of Conduct for Ethical and Effective Public Service is mandatory. (**The Public Services Act**, February 26, 2022)

Addendum attached.

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This addendum to Board Policy #14 provides a valuable list of definitions, actions and responsibilities that support the work of the Portage la Prairie School Division.

Definitions

The following are defined to ensure clarity and understanding.

- **Bullying** is behavior that is intended to cause, or should be known to cause, fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other forms of harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation or property; or is intended to create, or should be known to create, a negative school environment for another person.
 - Bullying characteristically takes place in a context of a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and is typically, but need not be, repeated behavior.
 - Bullying may be direct (face to face) or indirect (through others), and it may take place through any form of expression including written, verbal, or physical, or by means of any form of electronic communication (referred to as cyberbullying) including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites or email.
 - A person participates in bullying if he or she directly carries out the bullying behaviour or intentionally assists or encourages the bullying behaviour in any way. [PSA 1.2(1)(2)(3)]
- **Discrimination** occurs when people are not treated based on their individual worth, but instead are treated differently based on stereotypes and prejudices, and this results in a disadvantage and barriers to equal opportunities.
 - Discrimination often involves treating someone differently on the basis of a protected characteristic, such as ancestry, age or religion.
 - Discrimination may include failure to make reasonable accommodations for the special needs of any individual or group based on the protected characteristics of the *Manitoba Human Rights Code*. [MHRC 9(2)]
- **Diversity** encompasses all the ways in which human beings are both similar and different. It means understanding and accepting the uniqueness of individuals, as well as respecting their differences. Diversity may include, but is not limited to, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic status, religion, family status, mental and physical disability.
- **Equity** refers to the provision of equitable opportunity, equitable access to programming, services and resources critical to the achievement of outcomes for all students, and the staff who serve them. Equity and equality are not necessarily synonymous, as equity can be achieved through unequal means.

- Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense or feeling male or female, which may or may not be the same as one's biological sex. (Public Health Agency of Canada)

- Harassment is any behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g., touching, pushing), comments (e.g., jokes, name-calling), or displays (e.g., posters, cartoons). Harassment can also take place electronically (e.g., text messages, email, screensavers, or social media). *The Manitoba Human Rights Code* (MHRC) refers to harassment as a course of abusive and unwelcome conduct or comment made on the basis of any protected characteristic. [MHRC 19(2)]

- Sexual orientation is the term used to describe an individual's sexual, psychological and emotional feelings of attraction towards another person (Public Health Agency of Canada).

Staff Development

The Portage la Prairie School Division is committed to providing resources and professional learning opportunities that support all staff to increase their capacity to teach and support students on issues regarding human diversity, including areas of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Accommodation of Student Activities/Organizations

The Portage la Prairie School Division will accommodate students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that promote areas of human diversity. To assist staff and students in instituting such activities and organizations, organizers must adhere to the following guidelines and procedures.

- Activities and Organizations are:
 - to be consistent and in compliance with Division/school policies; and
 - open to all students who wish to participate in an appropriate manner.

Reporting

Any person who is aware of bullying or cyberbullying is required to report the incident to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. Principals will investigate any reports of bullying or cyberbullying. The duty to report also includes awareness that a student may have engaged in cyberbullying or been negatively affected by cyberbullying, whether it occurs during school or not. To respond to actions that contravene this policy, the Division and school Principals shall reference, as necessary Divisional policies (see File ADA), the Manitoba Public Schools Act, The Manitoba Human Rights Code, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Responsibilities

- Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning – provide information, training and feedback to school boards and school division staff to support them in the development and implementation of human diversity policies.
- School Board – is responsible for establishing a respect for human diversity policy which complies with the legislation, and ensure its implementation in each school.
- Senior Administration – play a leading role in overall policy implementation, promoting respect for human diversity and communicating policy expectations to staff, students, parents and community.
- Principals – Principals communicate and reinforce expectations for respecting human diversity policy to teachers and school staff and encourage their participation in professional development and training on human diversity and related topics.
- Teachers and Other Staff – play a key role in communicating and reinforcing expectations of respecting human diversity to students. Under legislation, teachers and school staff have an expanded duty to report matters of cyberbullying to the principal, whether it is believed to be happening at school or outside of regular school hours.
- Students – have responsibility to monitor their own interactions and conduct in ways that ensure a welcoming, safe, caring and inclusive school environment; particularly toward those previously identified as being at higher risk for bullying or discrimination.
- Parents and guardians – play an important role in their children’s understanding and respect for human diversity.



PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION

“Dedicated to the Pursuit of Excellence”

BOARD POLICY #15 Community Engagement

The Board will develop and implement the following strategies to enhance communication and consultation with communities, ratepayers, and the citizens of the School Division to promote community engagement.

- Develop formal connections with community, government, and other relevant agencies and organizations in order to gain support for the achievement of Board goals for the School Division. The Board will share information, proactively identify issues of importance, and work collaboratively to build positive relationships.
- Residents may influence the development of Board policies by:
 - electing trustees to represent the interests of the School Division;
 - writing suggestions or proposals;
 - presenting at hearings or Board meetings;
 - responding to surveys;
 - attending open meetings of the Board; and
 - attending their respective schools' Parent Advisory Council or their equivalent.
- Keep the public informed of the Board's deliberations, policies, challenges and actions by encouraging public attendance at all meetings with the exception of in-camera meetings.
- Designate a Board spokesperson who will endeavour to be current on all matters of Board governance and policy. In most cases this will be the Board Chair or the Chair's designate.
- Authorize the Superintendent or their designate to act as the primary spokesperson on operational or administrative matters.

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BOARD POLICY #16 Fiscal Management

Stewardship

The Board commits to the responsible fiscal stewardship of public funds. This stewardship is characterized by open and transparent reporting of all financial processes, results, matters and related issues.

Resources are managed in an efficient, effective and ethical manner in accordance with the Board’s vision, mission and values, and in compliance with The Public Schools Act and all other applicable legislation.

The Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer will ensure that the School Division operates its annual financial affairs in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and all requirements of The Public Schools Act. The Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer will keep the Board apprised of its financial position through the provision of operating statements on a quarterly basis or as requested.

Budget

Budget preparation and control shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer in consultation with the Board, the public and other stakeholders. The Board will approve the annual budget and direct the funds necessary to finance the operation of schools. Upon Board motion accepting the proposed budget, the Board shall, on or before March 31st of each year, submit the ensuing year’s budget to the Province of Manitoba.

Audit

The Board shall appoint an external auditor and furnish a duly audited annual financial statement and summary, available for public perusal, in compliance with The Public Schools Act. The Board will meet annually with the external auditor to receive and review the audited financial statements, act on any recommendations for compliance, and forward copies of the audited financial statements to the Province of Manitoba.

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BOARD POLICY #17 Assets and Facilities

Assets

The School Division shall operate in ways which protect and maintain its assets, and which will not unnecessarily expose the Division to risk.

The Superintendent is responsible for:

- adhering to all federal and/or provincially legislated requirements;
- ensuring adequate security of all School Division assets;
- protecting against theft, casualty and liability losses to the Board, staff, or the School Division itself through proper insurance;
- ensuring only authorized personnel have access to material amounts of funds;
- ensuring the School Division, the Board or its staff are not unknowingly exposed to claims of liability;
- maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system;
- acquiring, encumbering, or disposing of School Division property (land and any permanent fixtures on it) with the prior approval of the Board; and
- ensuring resources provided for use by School Division staff are used exclusively for division-related activities.

Facilities

The School Division is responsible for providing safe, inviting, well-designed, and well-maintained school grounds and facilities across the Division and has a fiduciary responsibility to its citizens and taxpayers to protect their investments in educational infrastructure.

The Superintendent is responsible for the approval of the School Division’s facility management goals, action plans, and procedures.

The Board endorses facility maintenance to contribute to student success. The regular review and evaluation of facility life-cycles and appropriate expenditures for required and preventative maintenance extend the useful life of facilities and reduce more significant future taxpayer expenditures and investments.

Facility maintenance shall:

- strive towards accessible, healthy and safe environments for students, staff, and public;
- utilize multi-year planning for maintenance and capital improvements to efficiently manage available resources;
- utilize preventative maintenance practices to maximize the life of buildings and building systems; and
- support facility design and construction practices that incorporate sustainable environmental goals and enhance student learning.

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BOARD POLICY #18 Transportation

The Board is responsible for the provision of safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation for all eligible students requiring access to educational programs at division-operated schools within the School Division. The Board will assist in providing transportation services for students participating in approved co-curricular and extra-curricular programs when feasible and within established administrative guidelines.

The Board endorses an on-going investment in student transportation, including the maintenance, upkeep and replacement of school buses, as being in the public’s best interest. Regular review and evaluation of bus life-cycles and appropriate expenditures for preventative and required maintenance extends the useful life of the fleet and protects the School Division’s transportation investment.

The Superintendent is responsible for the approval of the School Division’s transportation management procedures based on the following principles:

- student safety;
- bus transportation, organization and management must adhere to all provincial legislation and regulations; and
- the school timetable and route duration are fundamental considerations when establishing transportation service.

Quality and accessibility will be provided within annual budgetary considerations.

The Board’s only direct involvement in transportation management is to hear appeals to decisions made by the Superintendent.

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