



Be part of important decisions...

become a  
**school  
trustee**

The new Education Act (Bill 3), which is not yet in force, will make changes to school board elections; however these changes will not be implemented until after the 2013 election.

**A · S · B · A**  
Alberta School Boards  
Association

**SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS: OCTOBER 21, 2013**

## legal considerations for candidates

### Who is eligible to run for trustee?

Depending on if you are running for a Public or a Separate board or Francophone regional authority, candidates must meet the following requirements:

#### Candidates for Public jurisdictions must

- be eligible to vote in the election
- have lived in the local jurisdiction and the ward, if any, for six consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day<sup>1</sup>

#### Candidates for Separate jurisdictions must

- be eligible to vote in the election
- be of the same faith as those he/she seeks to represent on the Separate school board
- have lived in the local jurisdiction and the ward, if any, for six consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day<sup>1</sup>

#### Candidates for Francophone regional authorities must

- be at least 18
- be a Canadian citizen
- have lived in Alberta for six consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding this criterion, a candidate for trustee of a board of a school district that is wholly or partly within the boundaries of a city is not required to be a resident of the ward but must be a resident of the school district.

### These are general guidelines.

Candidates are encouraged to refer to the *Local Authorities Election Act* and the *School Act* for complete information. These Acts are posted on the ASBA website at [www.asba.ab.ca](http://www.asba.ab.ca).

### Who is eligible to vote?

You may vote in a Public or Separate jurisdiction if

- you are at least 18
- you are a Canadian citizen
- you have lived in Alberta for six consecutive months immediately preceding election day
- your residence is in the area on election day

You may vote in a Francophone regional authority if you

- are at least 18
- are a Canadian citizen
- are a Francophone
- have lived in Alberta for six consecutive months immediately preceding election day
- have a child enrolled in a school operated by the regional authority

### Who cannot run for school trustee?

See *Sections 22, 23 and 24 of the Local Authorities Election Act* for more detail.

The most common reasons for ineligibility are:

- An employee of any school district, school division, charter school or private school on nomination day cannot run for the office of school trustee – unless they take a leave of absence for this purpose. Employees may notify their employer that they are taking a leave of absence without pay on or after July 1 but before the last working day before nomination day.
- An auditor of the jurisdiction (for which the office is sought) on nomination day may not be a candidate.
- An individual who does not meet the residency requirement on nomination day may not be a candidate.
- A candidate must not otherwise be ineligible or disqualified as provided for under section 22 of the *Local Authorities Election Act*.

## submitting nomination papers

This is general information. Please confirm all dates and times with your school board office. Local authorities may set different dates and times for filing nomination papers and they may set alternative dates for election day.

### When do candidates file their nomination papers?

September 23, 2013. Typically the returning officer receives nominations at the local jurisdiction office between 10 a.m. and noon on nomination day.

### How many signatures do I need?

Check with your local school board office. This requirement varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

### Who can sign my nomination papers?

Each person who signs a candidate's nomination papers must be eligible to vote in the election for the office for which the candidate is running. They must be residents of the local jurisdiction on the day they sign the nomination form. Where there are wards, only electors who are residents of the ward for which a candidate is being nominated may sign the nomination form.

## Residency

Where there is no Separate board in a geographical area, a person of any faith may run for the school board. Where there is a Separate and Public board in the same geographical area, people having the same faith as the Separate board are only eligible to run for the Separate board. Other people are only eligible to run for the Public board.

## Conflict of interest

Trustees may not participate in making decisions in which their economic self-interest may be in conflict with their public duty. The economic or pecuniary interest of a trustee's spouse or adult interdependent partner is deemed to be the economic interest of the trustee. See Sections 80 to 91 of the *School Act* for: the types of pecuniary interest; the steps a trustee who is in conflict must follow; the disqualification of a trustee and the consequence of refusing to resign upon being disqualified as required under the *School Act*.



## what do school trustees do?

School trustees are politicians elected by and accountable to the community. The provincial government delegates to school boards the responsibility for conducting the affairs of the school jurisdiction. The school board:

- plans for the jurisdiction, setting priorities for the system in light of community wishes, available resources and sound educational practice
- sets goals for the jurisdiction, ensuring education stays in step with today's world
- evaluates the jurisdiction's chief executive officer – the superintendent of schools
- adopts an annual budget for the school system
- develops policy to guide the administration and employees toward jurisdiction goals
- communicates with the community on behalf of the jurisdiction
- educates others to ensure education is a top public priority and to make the community aware of the jurisdiction's achievements
- gathers information to make sound decisions
- hears appeals
- lobbies all levels of government on behalf of education

Alberta's  
**62 school boards**,  
made up of **450 trustees**,  
make decisions about how to  
**educate 585,000 children**  
in Kindergarten to Grade 12.  
School boards guide  
the expenditure of  
**\$6 billion** in  
tax dollars.





# what are the qualities of a successful school trustee?

## Prepared to put students first

Successful school trustees put the needs of students first. They run for office because they are committed to making things better for Alberta's children.

## An effective communicator

The primary role of the school trustee is to ensure the wishes of the whole community are reflected in the management and operation of the community's schools. Trustees must be willing ask the community what it needs and wants from its schools. Trustees must strive to inform the community about the school board's plans and decisions.

## A team player

A school trustee, acting individually, does not have the authority to make decisions. Only the school board, in public session, has the power to make decisions. While an interest in a particular school or issue may prompt you to seek office, as a school trustee, you are responsible for all schools in the jurisdiction. There is no room for "turf wars" in effective school board service.

## Not necessarily an "education expert"

You don't have to be an "education expert" to serve as a school trustee. The ideal school board includes people from all walks of life. The school trustee does not serve as a professional educator or as the spokesperson for a particular interest group or region. The effective school trustee considers the wishes of all parents, students and community members.

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### For more information:

Please contact your local school board office or visit the ASBA website at [www.asba.ab.ca](http://www.asba.ab.ca)

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