



POLICY 1500

TRUSTEE ROLE, RESPONSIBILITY AND CODE OF ETHICS

POLICY:

This policy is designed to clarify the role, responsibility, and conduct of members of the Rocky Mountain School District No. 6 Board of Education. As a member of the Board of Education, democratically elected Trustees are expected to govern in a just, equitable, unbiased, and ethical manner and to be role models in the community.

Trustees fully acknowledge the critical trust invested in the Board of Education by the electorate and are dedicated to governing the affairs and business of Rocky Mountain School District No. 6 in a professional manner. Trustees represent the broad needs of the entire school district and the community, allocating resources efficiently, equitably, and responsibly in the best interest of all students.

Trustees advocate for public education and promote the Mission, Vision, and Values of the District to other levels of government and relevant bodies. The Board of Education is committed to providing high quality education for all students within a supportive, accessible, and enriched learning environment. Trustees will uphold the commitments articulated in the Trustee Code of Ethics and address any violation at a closed meeting of the Board of Education.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. AS A TRUSTEE:

- 1.1 I will participate to the fullest extent possible, considering all perspectives with an open mind, so that I may be involved in an informed and responsible way in the functions of the Board of Education and the District.
- 1.2 I will work with other trustees in a spirit of good will. I will respect differences of opinion and assist new trustees in feeling welcome to the Board of Education.
- 1.3 I will carry out my responsibilities in accordance with the *School Act* and Regulations, and Board Policy.
- 1.4 I will do my best to protect, conserve, and advance public education, providing students the best possible learning facilities and programming possible.
- 1.5 I will work to promote safe and respectful work environments in the interest of overall employee wellness.
- 1.6 I will, when parents or members of the community ask a question or raise a concern about a particular staff member, classroom, principal or school, follow the procedures of Policy 9200 Problem Solving Protocol and Appeals Bylaw in addressing the question or problem.
- 1.7 I will express my honest and most thoughtful opinions in Board of Education meetings, in an effort to have all decisions made for the best interests of the children and the schools.
- 1.8 I will recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work.



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- 1.9 I will make no disparaging remarks, in or out of the Board meeting, about other Trustees or their opinions, but I reserve the right to make honest and respectful criticism.
- 1.10 I will be prepared to listen to what other Trustees, other individuals, or groups, may have to say before making final decisions.
- 1.11 I will not discuss the confidential business of the Board of Education in my home, on the street, or in my office.
- 1.12 I will not use my role as Trustee for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends, supporters, or business. If I become aware that I am in a position that creates a conflict of interest (direct, indirect; statutory or common law), I will declare the nature and extent of the conflict at a meeting of the Board of Education and abstain from deliberating or voting on the issue, giving rise to the conflict.
- 1.13 I will carefully review all information packages in preparation for discussion at all scheduled meetings of the Board of Education and its committees.
- 1.14 Commit to an appropriate use of social media and model appropriate digital citizenship.
- 1.15 I commit to advancing Truth and Reconciliation and Anti-Racism.

2. AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

- 2.1 I will act with integrity and the highest ethical standards in my personal and professional life, and in a manner that inspires public confidence in the Board of Education.
- 2.2 I will protect and enhance the reputation of the District and the Board of Education.
- 2.3 I will respect the confidentiality of communications between Trustees and Senior Administration.
- 2.4 I will recognize that authority rests with the Board of Education in legal session and not with individual members of the Board of Education, except as authorized by law.
- 2.5 I will vote for a closed meeting of the Board of Education if the situation requires it, and I will not participate in meetings of the Board of Education, which do not comply with Bylaw 1 – Procedural Bylaw.
- 2.6 I will abide by majority decisions of the Board of Education.
- 2.7 I will recognize that, although I am elected from a particular area of the District, my responsibility is to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the District as a whole.
- 2.8 I will consider it an important responsibility of the Board of Education to interpret the District's aims, methods and attitudes to the community. I will earnestly try to interpret the needs and attitudes of the community and do my best to translate them into the educational program of the schools.



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- 2.9 When representing the Board of Education, I will fulfill various commitments and duties required by such representation such as voting, providing updates, and reporting back to the Board of Education.

3. IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT, SECRETARY TREASURER, AND STAFF

- 3.1 I will function, in meeting the legal responsibility that is mine, as a part of a legislative, policy-forming body, and work through the administrative employees.
- 3.2 I will recognize the Superintendent, the Secretary Treasurer, and the senior leadership team as executive officers of the Board of Education.
- 3.3 I will endeavour to ensure the schools are staffed by the best trained, technical, and professional people it is possible to employ.
- 3.4 I will be respectful in my comments regarding the Superintendent or other District employees.

Appendix A VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE

The Trustee Code of Ethics requires each Trustee to commit to the highest ethical standards in their dealings with fellow Trustees, members of the school communities, and citizens of Rocky Mountain School District. The Board expects each member to adhere to the Code of Ethics (Policy 1200) in carrying out their role as Trustee. The Board recognizes that violations of the Code of Ethics can vary in severity and therefore, informal or formal procedures may be utilized to address alleged breaches, as appropriate.

Only serious and/or recurring breaches of the code(s) will be handled by the following official complaint procedure. A breach or violation is defined as something spoken, written, or actioned that violates the Rocky Mountain School District documented Code of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, mission, vision, values, policies and legal requirements.

The informal procedure may be used for non-serious breaches or an offence(s). A non-serious breach is defined as relatively minor or committed inadvertently or due to an error in judgement made in good faith.

Informal resolve will be done through a conciliation process between Trustee to Trustee and/or Administration leadership to Trustee. If resolution fails, the Board Chairperson or Vice Chairperson is consulted, and it is determined if the Board Chairperson attempts to gain resolution or if the formal process is to be taken.

PROCEDURES

1.0 Receiving Alleged Code of Ethics Breaches

It is imperative to establish and maintain clear, consistent, and effective procedures to receive any allegation of



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breach of the Trustee Code of Ethics from complainants. Those procedures include:

- 1.1 Any alleged breach must be brought forward in writing to the Board Chairperson, designate or the Secretary Treasurer within 30 days of the alleged breach occurring. There may be exceptional circumstances which could allow an extension of this timeline. If an allegation is made against the Board Chairperson, the alleged breach shall be managed by the Secretary Treasurer. The written complaint must include:
 - the name of the Trustee who is alleged to have committed the breach;
 - the specific allegation(s);
 - information regarding when the breach came to the complainant's attention;
 - the complainant's grounds that a breach of the Code of Ethics has occurred;
 - the name and contact information of the complainant, as well as any witnesses to the matter, or any other persons who have relevant information regarding the alleged breach.
- 1.2 Once received, all Trustees, including the subject of the alleged complaint, must be provided with a copy of the complaint within seven (7) days of receiving it.

2.0 Complaint Resolution Options

It is imperative to establish and maintain clear, consistent, and effective procedures to respond to any allegation of breach of the Trustee Code of Ethics. Options to complaint resolution include:

- 2.1 A recommendation by the Board Chairperson, or the Secretary Treasurer if the alleged breach is by the Chairperson, not to proceed with the complaint.
- 2.2 An agreement that an informal resolution is appropriate.
- 2.3 Undertaking an investigation process, conducted with procedural fairness, concluding with the preparation and presentation of a report of the investigation's findings in a timely manner in a closed (in camera) meeting for the board's consideration.
 - 2.3.1 Based on the results of the investigation, the Board (excluding the alleged offending Trustee) shall by motion decide whether the Trustee has breached the Code of Ethics and impose sanctions appropriate to the severity of the breach.
- 2.4 Undertake a Board Hearing process in a closed (in camera) meeting to determine by motion (excluding the allegedly offending Trustee) whether the Trustee has breached the Code of Ethics and impose sanctions appropriate to the severity of the breach. The hearing must provide a fair opportunity for all parties to be heard, but parties are not obligated to make submissions or respond to questions. The procedures of a Board Hearing are as follows:



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- 2.4.1 A quorum must be established for this meeting of the Board including Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer, and any Trustee conflicts must be declared. Minutes are to be taken by the Board's confidential Secretary, and legal counsel may be present at the discretion of the Trustee or the Board.
 - 2.4.2 If present, the complainant may provide a presentation which may be written, oral or both. Alternatively, the submitted written complaint is shared.
 - 2.4.3 The allegedly offending Trustee responds with a presentation to the Board which may be written, oral or both.
 - 2.4.4 The complainant, if present, and the Board Chairperson may reply to the respondent Trustee's presentation.
 - 2.4.5 The respondent Trustee may reply to the complainant's presentation and subsequent remarks.
 - 2.4.6 The remaining Board of Education Trustees may ask questions.
 - 2.4.7 The complainant, if present, may make final comments.
 - 2.4.8 The allegedly offending Trustee may make final comments.
 - 2.4.9 The full Board, excluding the allegedly offending Trustee, engage in private deliberation. Should clarification or more information be required, this may be obtained from the parties or the hearing may recess or be adjourned until a later date.
 - 2.4.10 Following deliberation, the Board Chairperson calls for a resolution to be placed before the Board. The resolution may indicate what action, if any, may be taken. A vote is conducted, requiring a two-thirds vote to pass.

3.0 Sanctions for Breach of Code of Ethics

Where the Board determines that a Trustee has breached the Code of Ethics, the Board may censure the Trustee or enforce specific sanctions.

- 3.1 Upon the Board determining that a Trustee has breached the Code of Ethics, sanctions shall be applied. Possible sanctions include but are not limited to:



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- 3.1.1 Offending Trustee write letter of apology.
 - 3.1.2 Offending Trustee participate in a restorative justice process.
 - 3.1.3 Offending Trustee participate in specific training, coaching, or counselling as directed by the Board of Education.
 - 3.1.4 Board Chairperson write a censure letter marked “personal and confidential” to the offending Trustee, on the approval of a majority of the Voting Trustees at the closed meeting of the Board.
 - 3.1.5 Having a motion of censure passed by a majority of the Voting Trustees at the closed (in camera) meeting of the Board.
 - 3.1.6 Having a motion to remove the offending Trustee from one, some or all Board committees or other appointments of the Board passed by a majority of the Voting Trustees at the closed meeting of the Board.
 - 3.1.7 The Board of Education may, in its discretion and by resolution of all voting Trustees, make public any outcome of the Official Complaint Process, if it is considered reasonable and appropriate to indicate publicly its disposition of the complaint.
 - 3.1.8 The Board may bar the Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of Board or a committee of the Board. With this absence authorized by the Board, the Trustee shall not receive any materials that relate to the meeting that are not available to the public. This sanction is appropriate when the infraction includes the failure to maintain the necessary confidentiality of information.
- 3.2 Sanctions shall be applied as follows:
- 3.2.1 The Board shall give the Trustee written notice of the determination and any possible sanctions in a timely manner;
 - 3.2.2 The Board shall provide the Trustee with 14 days to provide a written response regarding the determination and/or sanctions;
 - 3.2.3 After considering the submission, the Board shall confirm or revoke the determination and/or sanctions within 14 days of receiving the written submission;



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- 3.2.4 If the determination is revoked, the sanctions are revoked; and
 - 3.2.5 If the determination is confirmed, the Board may confirm, vary or revoke the sanctions. Where a breach of the Trustee Code of Ethics has occurred, sanctions of a Trustee shall be undertaken by the Chair by writing a letter of censure to the Trustee in question. This action shall be reported at the next Regular Meeting of the Board.
 - 3.3 For a second occurrence of a breach, a motion of censure shall be presented against the Trustee in question, at a Regular Meeting of the Board, unless to do so would require a disclosure of confidential information other than a previous letter of censure.
 - 3.4 For a third and subsequent occurrence, a motion to remove the trustee in question from one, or more, or all Board appointments shall be presented at a Regular Meeting of the Board.

Notwithstanding indemnification provided for trustees and damages incurred during the normal routines of their role, Trustees who have been sanctioned or have had other measures imposed upon them by the Board of Education under this policy can appeal those decisions at their own expense through the legal system.