



Introduction

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents 31 English language public district school boards and 10 public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million kindergarten through Grade 12 students across the province.

OPSBA advocates on behalf of member boards in the best interest of students. The Association's key priorities are the guiding force behind its advocacy. These priorities are designed to advocate for the conditions that support and improve student achievement and well-being.

Local, democratically elected school boards play a key role in ensuring that schools remain responsive to both provincial requirements and local needs and resources. This document is primarily intended to provide public school board trustees with a practical guide to the education sector. It will also be useful for staff and other stakeholders.

Message to Trustees:

As a member of a school board you take your place in a history that started in 1816 when school trustees became the first democratically elected representatives in Ontario. Taking up the office of school board trustee is a call, not only to carry on the tradition of local decision-making, but to model ethical and courageous leadership that values every member of the board community and reaches for equity of outcomes for our students. It's an opportunity to drive the ongoing positive improvements that contribute to one of the strongest education systems in the world.

This guide offers a substantive introduction to the work of effectively governing a school board. Your many and varied responsibilities are all focused on the central goals of improving student achievement and well-being, ensuring safe and inclusive learning environments, and building public trust. From strategic planning to budget-setting, community engagement to assessing the director's performance, the chapters in this guide offer practical information on Ontario's education system and on your role as a leader within it.

Setting the conditions that will provide a high-quality education for every student to reach their full potential in school and in life is the first priority of a school board. As a leader in school board governance, you help to ensure that Ontario's education system continues to adapt and transform to meet the ever-changing needs and shifting challenges of our rapidly evolving world. This requires collaborative work with key education partners at all levels of the education system.

Leadership in education is vital and school boards must lead by example in demonstrating strength in public education governance.

Congratulations to you on starting a new term of office, and thank you for your commitment to responding to the needs of your board with flexibility, integrity, and principled action. It is hoped that you will find yourself inspired by the challenges and opportunities of your position as trustee and by the influential role you will play as a member of your school board.

Your term as trustee will bring you opportunities for learning and growth, a sense of accomplishment, and professional satisfaction. Through your board service, you are helping to shape the future of Ontario.