

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
<i>Administrative Procedure</i>	<i>Administrative Procedure Number</i>
Election Activities and Use of Corporate Resources	605
<i>Directional Policy</i>	
600 – Stewardship of Resources	

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Election Activities and Use of Corporate Resources

Date Approved:

March 2022

Projected Review Date:

2027

Directional Policy Alignment:

This administrative procedure aligns with the Directional Policy of *Stewardship of Resources* (600).

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

This Administrative Procedure supports legislated requirements and Board-established By-laws, policies and procedures that set out the governance and accountability framework of PVNCCDSB. These activities support the strategic priority of Being Community.

It establishes, in a clear and transparent manner, a framework to manage political activity related to school board, municipal, provincial and federal elections or by-elections and to limit the use of Board resources in electoral campaigns.

[PVNCCDSB Board Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities](#)

Action Required:

This procedure applies to election activities by Trustees and candidates, as defined in the Definitions section. Staff, volunteers, students, school councils, the Board's community advisory committees and their members also have certain responsibilities under this procedure.

This Procedure operates as a supplement to the existing statutes governing conduct of members of the Board in all their roles and candidates for public office, including but not limited to the *Education Act*, *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, *Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

This Administrative Procedure recognizes that Trustees are holders of their office until the end of the term and supports them in continuing to fulfill their responsibilities as Trustees. Nothing in this procedure should preclude a Trustee from performing their duty as an elected official or inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents during the election period.

A. General Restrictions Applicable at All Times

Election processes are an important part of the democratic process and can provide rich opportunity for students to learn about the democratic process. It is the responsibility of the Board to protect the integrity of the election process by affording all electoral candidates equitable access and opportunity in election related activities in schools or the district.

1. Use of Board Resources, Communications and Election Activities

- All candidates are prohibited from election activities on Board property, including distribution of election related signs, pamphlets or buttons and the use of school resources or school communication tools. Use of election related signs on Board premises in windows or offices is prohibited.
- Candidates (including campaign volunteers) are prohibited from using pictures videos, or recording audio of PVNCCDSB students, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers for any election activity without their explicit written consent. Board staff will not create any photographic or video materials for use in any election related materials.
- Websites or domain names that are funded by the Board will not include any election activity materials. Personal social media accounts for election activity will not be created or supported using Board resources.

- Trustees will not distribute media releases using the resources of the Board including communications networks or distribution systems for election purposes.
- Trustees will not use the services of any staff of the Board to assist in any communication activity related to the preparation or distribution of election related materials or events.
- Trustees will not use their Board office or information technology resources (e.g. tablets, computers) for election activities.
- Trustees will not use Board resources or funds to print or distribute information which promotes themselves as a candidate for the Board of Trustees or any other candidate for municipal, provincial or federal office.
- Trustees may distribute information regarding all candidates' meetings being held on Board property, provided that they are not a participant in the debate.
- Trustees will not use the Board's email/voice mail system to record, distribute or disseminate election activity messages or correspondence.
- Trustees will not use any distribution lists or email addresses obtained when carrying out Official Business of the Trustee Office for election activity purposes.

2. Restrictions for Students and Employees

- Students are not to be involved in a candidate's election activity during school hours, nor on Board property at any time.
- Employees must not engage in election activities of any kind during work hours nor on Board property. Employees who support or work for a registered candidate must keep these activities outside of work hours.
- No Board property (e.g. phone, fax, computer, e-mail, e-mail and distribution lists and photocopier) will be used for election activity.
- Employees must not provide any personal information (name, address, phone number, email) of students and parents/guardians, including school council and community advisory committee members to any candidates or their staff.
- Employees must not provide any election related materials to students or their parents/guardians.

B Restrictions during the Election Period

1. School Visits by Candidates and other Public Office Holders

- Politicians (including Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, City Councilors, Trustees) may visit a school at the invitation of the principal and the superintendent of the school in consultation with the Director's Office. Visits must be for the benefit of students, non-partisan in nature and to serve an educational purpose (including curriculum- and official government-based election education programs).
- School visits by candidates and public office holders cannot be used for election activity purposes. Any requests by candidates and public office holders without official duties in schools or to address students for election activity purposes will be denied.
- Current Trustees may only partake in school visits if related to fulfilling official business (including graduation ceremonies) as part of their usual role and not for election activity purposes.

2. All-Candidates Meetings

Requests by Schools

- Schools may use the election periods as learning opportunities for enhancing curriculum delivery where appropriate.
- For all-candidate meetings requested by the school for curriculum purposes, messaging from school administration must be of a non-partisan nature. The audience should be limited to students taking relevant courses only.
- Invitations to all-candidate meetings will be provided well in advance of the scheduled date to all registered candidates. All-candidate meetings should only proceed with the confirmation of at least two candidates available to attend the meeting.
- The registered candidates must be given equal time to speak and debate is to be focused only on the issues of their own/party's platform. Candidates must maintain respectful debate.
- The meeting is primarily for the education of students, however media requests to attend may be arranged through Communication Services.

Requests by the Community

- To protect the neutrality of individual schools, campaigning (including election related materials and signage) is prohibited on Board property, except for the duration of an all-candidates meeting and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the PVNCCDSB permit. No election related materials will be given to students or distributed for students to take home. Event organizers must not give preferential treatment to any candidate or political party.
- For community members wishing to host an all candidates meeting at a PVNCCDSB facility, a permit must be requested through the Community Use of Schools process. Permit holders for all-candidate meetings are governed by the rules and regulations as outlined in the facility permit and must use Board facilities in a responsible and respectful manner.
- Any media requests or invites to all-candidates debates in schools, must be arranged through Communication Services. No media invites or requests to schools should be made or granted during an election period without the approval of Communication Services.

3. Media at Schools and Polling Stations

- Media may only enter the polling station area with the permission of the Returning Officer in charge of the polling station area. If polling stations are located in cafeterias or other areas that students must access as part of the regular school day, these stations are considered off limits to media.
- Media may not enter and/or film any other part of the school during voting time or on voting day. The media may not speak to and/or film or interview any students or staff on Board property.
- For concerns with media at polling stations, the Returning Officer should be notified. In the event that the concern persists, the principal or designate may ask the media to leave the premises.

4. Restrictions for Students, Employees, School Councils and Community Advisory Committees

- School councils and community advisory committees must not endorse a specific candidate or campaign on behalf of a specific candidate.
- School councils and community advisory committees must not distribute information on behalf of, or about, a specific candidate. If it is the normal practice of the school council or community advisory committee to meet regularly with the local Trustee(s), the meetings may continue as they usually would in the business of the Board.

- Members of school councils and community advisory committees are not subject to the above restrictions when acting in their capacity as a private citizen off of Board property.

5. Websites and Social Media Restriction during a Municipal Election Year (beginning August 1)

- Commencing August 1 and until voting day in a municipal election year, platform accounts of existing Trustees will be separate and distinct from those platforms used for election purposes. Platforms used for election purposes :
 - Will not use the Board logo, branding or title of Trustee
 - Will be separate and distinct from any accounts used by the candidate in their position as Trustee
 - Will not provide a link to or from, or reference any existing electronic accounts used for the candidate's work as a Trustee
 - Will include a clear statement that the account is for election activity purposes and not related to their position of Trustee

Responsibilities:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment with the Stewardship of Resources Directional Policy
- Reviewing the Election Activities and Use of Board Resources Administrative Procedure as part of its regular policy and procedures review cycle.
- Ensuring fair and transparent access to the Board of Trustees by candidates running for municipal, provincial or federal office.
- Protecting the integrity of the election process by affording all electoral candidates equitable access and opportunity in elected related activities in schools or the district.
- Being familiar with the requirements of this Administrative Procedure and complying with all noted restrictions.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Overseeing implementation and compliance with the Election Activities and Use of Board Resources Procedure
- Ensuring that any and all campaign-related expenses related to incumbent Board members are not charged or allocated to any Board account.

Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:

- Ensuring that, during any school trustee election period, they act in a manner the school community members, current Trustees and Trustee candidates consider to be impartial, fair and unbiased.
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Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Ensuring that use of school facilities for election purposes are restricted and, where authorized, supplement learning objectives. Where conditions are met, fair and equitable access to facilities may be granted by the principal, and should provide learning opportunities for students.
- Ensuring that, during any school trustee election period, they act in a manner the school community members, current Trustees and Trustee candidates consider to be impartial, fair and unbiased.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that any election activities or personal involvement in a candidate's campaign does not take place during school hours or on school property.
- Ensuring that no candidate or political party is endorsed while the staff member is undertaking their duties as an employee or agent of the Board,

Students are responsible for:

- Engaging in curriculum related activities that promote the democratic process and participating in programs such as STUDENT VOTE and/or candidate events for students.
- Ensuring that any election activities or personal involvement in a candidate's campaign does not take place during school hours or on school property.

Catholic School Councils are responsible for:

- Determining, in consultation with their school communities, the need and nature of meetings that they sponsor with political candidates. Where school councils choose to provide access for candidates, fair and equitable access shall be provided to all candidates.

Progress Indicators:

- Neutrality of individual schools is maintained.
- Equitable access and opportunity is afforded all election candidates.

Definitions:

Board Property: means all sites owned, operated or leased by the Board, as well as any Board sites that are occupied by other groups, businesses and organizations in a lease or other agreement.

Board Resources: includes but is not limited to facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff, funds, branding (logo/wordmark) or other resources owned and operated by the Board

By-Election: means an election other than a regular election that is conducted in accordance with the governing legislation.

Candidate: means any person who has filed and not withdrawn a nomination for an elected office at the school board, municipal council, provincial or federal level in an election or by-election. For the purposes of this Procedure, individuals campaigning for a nomination to represent the provincial or federal government in an upcoming election are also considered candidates.

Constituent: means a ratepayer who is defined as a supporter of the English Catholic school board system under the Education Act and within the jurisdiction of the Board.

Election: means a regular election and also includes a by-election.

Election activity: refers to activities related to campaigning for school board, municipal council, provincial and federal office, including seeking the nomination in an election. A Trustee may distribute information regarding an all-candidates meeting being held at a school for municipal, provincial or federal office, provided that they are not a candidate for that election.

Election Period: is the official campaign period of an election.

For a school board and municipal council election, the election period commences on May 1 of an election year and ends on voting day.

For a provincial or federal election, the election period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on voting day.

For a by-election at the school board, municipal council, provincial or federal level, the period commences when the by-election is called and ends on voting day.

Official Business: means duties and responsibilities as prescribed by the Education Act and further explained in the Board by-laws, Directional Policies and Administrative Procedures.

Partisan: means identification or support for a specific political party or an individual seeking or holding public office

Regular Election: means a general election for school board, municipal council, provincial and federal office.

Social Media: includes any freely accessible, third-part hosted interactive web technology used to produce, post and interact through text, images, video and audio to inform, share, promote, collaborate or network. Websites, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest are examples

Trustee: means a person elected, acclaimed or appointed to the office of trustee or a member of the Board, pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act and the Education Act.

Trustee Office: means the authority and public duties attached to the position of being elected as a PVNCCDSB Trustee

Voting Day: means the day the final vote is to be taken in an election.

References:

- Education Act
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- Municipal Elections Modernization Act 2016
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act