



Frequently Asked Questions for Trustee Candidates

When are school board elections being held?

A School Board election will be held on Wednesday, October 26, 2022. Senior Election Official, Jody Percival, will be accepting Nomination Papers commencing Wednesday, September 14, 2022, during the election period. Nomination papers will be available from the Division Office located at 1126 St. Clare Street in Birtle, between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Nomination papers must have 25 signatures of voters whose names appear on the Voters List. Signatures must also be from residents who reside in the ward in which they are seeking election. The deadline to file nomination papers is Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 3:30 pm.

What are the qualifications of a school trustee?

Public school trustees come from all walks of life. They are retirees, homemakers, professionals, trades people, university students—the list goes on. What these people do have in common, however, is a sincere interest in children and education, and a desire to serve their communities.

Required qualifications for the school trustees are listed under the Public School Act and are as follows: Section 22:

“A person is qualified to be nominated for and elected as a trustee of a school board, if the person:

- (a) is a Canadian citizen;
- (b) is of the full age of 18 years, or will be of the full age of 18 years, at the date of the election;
- (c) is an actual resident in the school division or school district, and will have been so for a period of at least six months at the date of the election; and
- (d) is not disqualified under any of the provision of this Act or under any other Act, and is not otherwise by law prohibited, from being a trustee or from voting at elections in the school division or school district.”

Employee elected as trustee Section 22(3):

“An employee of the same school board, school division or school district is disqualified from serving as a trustee unless he or she takes a leave of absence under subsection 48.”

Park West School Division also requires that successful candidates undergo a Criminal Record and Child Abuse Records Check.

My spouse teaches in the school division in which we live. Can I still run for school trustee?

An individual whose spouse works for a school division may still be a trustee in that same division. There are, however, some matters which come before the board where that trustee would be considered to have a conflict of interest. In those situations (such as salary negotiations), that trustee would not involve him or herself in the debate or voting on that specific matter. There are several other situations where a trustee could have a potential conflict of interest. Legislation requires that situations such as these be declared when a trustee takes office.

I am a public school teacher. Does that disqualify me from running for school trustee?

A teacher or other school division employee may serve as a school trustee. If you work in the same school division in which you live, you will be required to take a leave of absence from your job in order to serve.

What are the ward boundaries and trustee representative?

Park West School Division has ten wards, with one trustee elected per ward. Although elected on a ward basis, all ten trustees have the responsibility of making decisions in the best interest of the Division as a whole, not only their own ward. The ward maps can be found on our website.

A candidate does not have to live in the specific ward in which he or she runs, as long as they do reside in the division. However, nomination papers must be signed by electors who do live in the ward in which the candidate will be running. A list of eligible voters can be obtained from the Park West School Division Office in late August.

I live in one school division, but own property in a neighbouring one. Can I run for school trustee in either of the two divisions?

No. The Public Schools Act requires that a candidate be "an actual resident in the school division," and that he or she has been so for a period of at least six months at the date of the election.

How many Board meetings are there?

Typically, Regular Board Meetings are held in the evenings of the second Thursday of each month, except for the month of August in which the meeting will be held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Most meetings start at 6:00 pm.

Do I need to be available during the day?

In addition to Board meetings there are standing committees of the Board which meet on an as-needed basis. The meetings are scheduled prior to regular Board meetings to be both time and cost effective.

The Board may meet during the day during budget time (January to March) in order to hear presentations from department heads.

When do successful candidates take office?

Under The Public Schools Act, the first meeting of the School Board following the regular election of trustees is to take place within 14 days after the election. At the first meeting the trustees will elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson, as well as committee chairpersons and members.

Will there be an information session for newly elected trustees?

An orientation session for new trustees will be held prior to the inaugural meeting to provide information regarding the operation of the School Board and meeting procedures and to respond to questions. As well, many new trustees attend training sessions organized by the Manitoba School Boards Association in the fall following trustee elections. These sessions bring together newly elected trustees from across the province and help to familiarize them with their new role.

Do trustees get paid?

Park West School Division's By-Law 04-21 lists the annual indemnity as follows for the 2021/2022 term: Chair of the Board of Trustees \$8,200, Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees \$6,600, Trustees \$6,175. The same amounts have been approved in the budget for 2022/2023.

Can I campaign at the school and school events?

No. Requests made by individual candidates to visit schools are not considered to be appropriate during an election campaign. These visits would include classroom visits, and meetings with parent council, or administrators.

Concerts, open houses, and other school-related events are intended for students and their families and are not for candidates to use for campaigning purposes. If a candidate is a parent in a school, they are certainly welcome to attend, in the role of parent. If a school function is held around election time, and the candidate would normally attend, they may continue to do so, but may not address the audience, or speak with school community members about the upcoming election.

Can I advertise through the school?

Campaign materials are not to be distributed or circulated via schools. This includes any campaign materials distributed indirectly (for example through a parent council) to students and/or parents. Any election signage cannot be placed within 50 metres of a voting place (the Elections Act, Manitoba).

Schools should not accept sponsorship or donations from candidates.

Can student/parent councils endorse a candidate?

It is not appropriate for councils to endorse a specific candidate or to campaign (in their role as a council member) on behalf of a specific candidate. If desired, the council may host an all-candidates meeting to help the parents in learning more about the community candidates, or the election process. The council may not, however distribute any information on behalf or about a specific candidate.

Should a council member choose to run for elected office, they may do so, and may continue in their role for the remainder of the current school year. It must be noted however, that they may not use their position in any way to promote their campaign while serving as a member of council.

I am a member of my Municipal Council. Can I still run for school trustee?

No, a person can hold and be nominated for only one office at any one time.