

Preparing for the 2026 Local Elections



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Goals for the Session

- ▶ To be aware of the steps pre-election that Districts should consider in advance of the October 2026 election
- ▶ To discuss post-election requirements and best practices
- ▶ To share available third-party resources



Discussion Topics

- ▶ Pre-Election
 - ▶ By-Law Review and changes to the Local Government Act
 - ▶ Helping Potential Candidates under the role
 - ▶ Preparing Trustee Orientation
 - ▶ District Policy Review and Orientation Preparation
 - ▶ Contracts with Municipalities Pre-election
- ▶ Post-Election
 - ▶ Orientation of trustees
 - ▶ Legislative requirements
 - ▶ Oh no a by-election!
 - ▶ Future planning
- ▶ Third Party Resources



Pre-Election – *School Act and Local Government Act*

- ▶ *What type of District are you?*
- ▶ *School Act*
 - ▶ *Sections 35-48*
- ▶ *Local Government Act*
 - ▶ *Part 3 Section 47-168*



Pre-Election – *School Act*

- ▶ Four types of elections
 - ▶ Single municipality or electoral area run by municipality
 - ▶ Multi-Jurisdictional – Contracted to local authorities
 - ▶ Multi-Jurisdictional – Operated by Board (unlikely)
 - ▶ Multi-Jurisdictional – partially operated by Board partially operated by local jurisdiction



Pre-Election – District Election By-law

- ▶ Legislation has changed ensure your by-law is up-to-date – Ensure it references notice requirements
- ▶ When was the last time it was checked?
- ▶ BCSTA is providing support
- ▶ What about a by-election?



Pre-Election – District Election By-law

▶ Local Government Act (section 56)

(2) Unless otherwise provided,

(a) in order for a bylaw referred to in subsection (1) to apply in relation to a general local election, the bylaw must be adopted at least 56 days before the first day of the nomination period of the general local election, and

(b) in order for a bylaw referred to in subsection (1) to apply in relation to an election under section 54 [*by-elections*], the bylaw must be adopted at least 42 days before the first day of the nomination period for the election.

▶ School Act (section 45)

(6) In order for a bylaw under this Part, or under Part 3 of the *Local Government Act* or Part I of the *Vancouver Charter* as those Parts apply to trustee elections, to apply to a trustee election, the board must adopt the bylaw at least 4 weeks before the first day of the nomination period for the trustee election.



Pre-Election Preparing your communities for the role

- ▶ Trustee information nights
- ▶ Ensure potential candidates are aware of the authority a trustee has
- ▶ Ensure potential candidates are aware what is not subject to Board authority
- ▶ What is the electoral jurisdiction of land based First Nations?



Pre-election - Reviewing Relevant Board Policies

- ▶ Board procedure by-law or policy
- ▶ Inclusion and/or equity policies
- ▶ Criminal Record check policies
- ▶ Do you have any major issues coming up that the policy should be updated before a new board? (school closure, boundaries etc.)



BCTSA/Ministry Policy Update

- ▶ Board Policy Review Advisory Committee Update



Training Opportunity

- ▶ LGMA Online Training Module



Pre-election - Contracting with Local Municipalities

- ▶ What type of election?
 - ▶ Single jurisdiction – Municipality must conduct election
 - ▶ Can charge only “additional” costs of conducting election (38(1))
 - ▶ No definition of “additional”
 - ▶ Not a single municipality (e.g. multi-jurisdictional “at large system”) – Municipality may run unless ordered by Minister.
 - ▶ Can charge “costs necessarily incurred”.
 - ▶ Typically, agreed in a contract



Pre-election – Municipal Acclamation

- ▶ What happens if a jurisdiction doesn't run an election (e.g. counsellors are acclaimed?)



Post-Election – Statutory Requirements

► First Board Meeting and Swearing In

General term of office

49 The term of office of a trustee elected at a general school election

(a) begins on the first Monday after November 1 following the election or when the person takes office in accordance with section 50 (3), whichever is later, and

(b) ends immediately before the first Monday after November 1 in the year of the next general school election or when at least 3 trustees elected at or appointed following that election have taken office, whichever is later.

► Candidate Disclosure and Elections BC

► What about the last meeting of the Board? Who should be invited?



Post-Election – The Oath

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/d/bcreg_38293.pdf

- Other Best Practices (Code of Conduct)
- Outgoing Trustees



Post-Election – Orientation

- ▶ Plan well in advance
- ▶ What were the issues you faced in the previous term?
- ▶ Don't assume individuals understand their roles



Post-Election – Best Practices

- ▶ Conflict Checks
- ▶ Criminal Record Checks
- ▶ Policy Training
- ▶ Robert's Rules Training
- ▶ Team Building



Post-Election – By-Election

- ▶ Section 36 of the *School Act*
- ▶ Considerations for your by-law – registration in person



Post-Election – Personal Matters

- ▶ Significant changes to the Board
- ▶ Problematic Trustees
- ▶ Staff to trustee conflict
- ▶ Trustee to trustee conflict



Resources

- ▶ <https://elections.bc.ca/local-elections/2026-general-local-elections/>
- ▶ https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schooltrustee/school_trustee_election_procedures.pdf
- ▶ Election Calculator
- ▶ BCSTA (check your websites for relevancy)
- ▶ Legal Resources (a few examples)
 - ▶ Keith Mitchell, Harris & Co.
 - ▶ Josh Krusell, Stewart McDannold Stuart

