



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE SIR-WILFRID-LAURIER  
SIR WILFRID LAURIER SCHOOL BOARD

Policy n°  
2004-CA-10

## Role of the Chairman of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

Resolution n°

040324-CA-0145

Revision: On an as need basis

### 1.0 Nature of the Chair

An effective Chairman of a school board generally possesses the following attributes:

- Good leadership.
- Navigator.
- Planner.
- Organizer.
- Communicator.
- Interpreter.
- Trouble-shooter.

The Chairman of the school board clarifies and articulates the board's goals, directions, and policies, and grasps the importance of community engagement, communication and understanding of the board's role within the following areas:

- The education community.
- The network of English language school boards.
- Liaison with the Ministry of Education.
- Liaison with the French language school boards on the territory of Laval-Laurentides-Lanaudière.
- Liaison with the associations representing the English language school boards.

### 2.0 The Board Chairman as Leader

#### ***The Education Act R.S.Q., c1-13.3***

Section 155 of the Education Act reads:

*The council of commissioners shall appoint the chairman and the vice-chairman of the school board from among its members.*

*The term of office of the chairman and the vice-chairman expires at the same time as their term as commissioners, unless they are relieved of their duties by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the members of the council of commissioners who are entitled to vote.*

Section 157 states that:

*Any vacancy in the office of chairman or vice-chairman shall be filled within 30 days.*

Section 159 defines the functions as follows:

*The chairman shall preside over the sittings of the council of commissioners. He shall maintain order at sittings of the council.*

In leading the meetings of the Council of Commissioners, the Chairman blends the authority and responsibilities of the position with interpersonal skills to help the Council reach decisions. The role of the Chairman in the conduct of Council meetings is as follows:

- Starting and ending of the meeting as per the by-law on date, time and place.
- Setting a positive tone for the meeting.
- Preserving order.
- Moving the meeting along by adhering to the agenda.
- Keeping discussion centered on the issues being debated.
- Allowing all sides of an issue the opportunity to be heard.
- Treating all members of the Council fairly and equally.
- Understanding basic parliamentary procedures e.g. Robert's Rules of Order used for the conduct of the meeting of the Council and the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board Policy # 2000-CA-04 on the Rules of Order and Procedure for Council Meetings.
- Bringing issues to a conclusion.
- Insisting that the members of the Council follow the Code of Ethics as required by the Education Act and adopted by the Board.
- Ensuring that the members of the Council adhere to adopted Board policies.

In order to conduct successful meetings of the Council of Commissioners, the Chairman must work in conjunction with the Director General and the Deputy Director General in planning the meeting. Specifically, the Chairman must know:

- The reason each item is on the agenda.
- The potential problems that might arise from an agenda item.
- How much time each agenda item might take.
- What board action is required for each item (if any).
- What reports the Director General, Deputy Director General or Directors will make.
- What recommendations the Director General or Deputy Director General will make.
- How the public may participate in the meeting.

To further ensure successful meetings of the Council of Commissioners, the Chairman will:

- Make certain that members of the Council and the public know the dates, time and place of the meetings.
- Make certain that members of the Council of Commissioners receive information packets at least 4 days before the scheduled meeting.
- Ascertain that the meeting room is adequate for the specific meeting of the Council.
- Make sure that the physical requirements of the room contribute to a successful meeting environment.

### **3.0 The Chairman as a Member of the Board**

Being Chairman does not take away his rights as a board member.

The Chairman allows the members of the Council of Commissioners to speak first, before expressing his own opinion, and as an elected commissioner is expected to participate in board decisions and actions.

The Chairman does not dominate the discussion or force an opinion on the board. Furthermore, the Chairman of the board can and will vote except as with other commissioners, if there exists a conflict of interest.

In the event of a tie in a vote of the Council, the Chairman of the school board will have the casting vote.

### **4.0 The Role of the Chairman as a Supervisory Elected Official**

The Chairman has no authority as an individual supervisor of either the Director General or the Deputy Director General. The Chairman shall facilitate an annual evaluation of the Board's senior administrators through the application of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board Policy #2000-HR-03.

The Chairman will communicate either orally or in written manner the conclusions of the Council with regard to this annual evaluation and make recommendations pertaining to suggested improvements.

## **5.0 The Role of the Chairman as Communicator**

The Chairman represents the Board to outside parties.

- As per the **draft** Communications Policy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, Section 6.1: *The Chairman of the Council of Commissioners or in his/her absence and with his/her knowledge, the Vice-chairman is the official representative of the school board and must make the population and organizations aware of the decisions and main directions of the Council of Commissioners.* He is mandated to provide public information on representations and political decisions made by the Council of Commissioners. At his request, selected commissioners may also act as spokespersons on behalf of the school board.
- Furthermore, Sections 6.7 of said policy designates a spokesperson: *The Chairman of the Council of Commissioners and the Director General of the school board are the official spokespersons of the school board.*
- During Board consultation periods, the Chairman may elaborate the school board's position to the various stakeholders.

## **6.0 The Role of the Chairman as Planner**

The Chairman of the school board will exercise leadership in the planning and future directions of the Board. As such, he may facilitate and organize planning conferences for the members of the Council and the members of the Senior Administration and Directorate. The Chairman may also invite other participants as the need arises.

## **7.0 The Role of the Chairman as Signing Authority for the Board**

The Chairman of the school board will act as a signing officer.

- The Chairman will sign cheques, bonds, loans and other legal or financial engagements. He shall provide an account of his actions to the Finance Committee and as required to the Council.
- The Chairman will sign labour agreements as they apply to the different unions and associations representing the school board's employees.

## **8.0 The Role of the Chairman During School Elections**

In accordance with the Act respecting school elections the election period is forty-four days. The Act further stipulates that the Council of Commissioners is authorized to sit only in the event of an "emergency".

The Education Act (R.S.Q., chapter I-13.3) further stipulates that the mandate of the Chairman expires at the end of the mandate as Commissioner, which is normally five days after polling day.

During the election period there may be occasions where it becomes necessary for the Chairman to exercise some of his functions. It is imperative that this office not be used in any partisan way during the election period or, for that matter, any other period. The Chairman, however, continues as a Commissioner and an elector within the territory of the school board.