

WHAT DOES EVERY PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEE IN SASKATCHEWAN NEED TO KNOW?



Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association

The Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association, local and regional trustees, public library directors and the Provincial Library and Literacy Office formed a committee to answer this question and create a provincial strategy for trustee development.

Tip: Every member of an organization should be familiar with the simple rules and customs of parliamentary procedure.

Tip: Any board must speak with one voice and that voice is vested in the board chair. Individual board members ought not to speak on behalf of the board or direct staff in the operation of their duties.

Watch for: Advocacy and library promotion will be added to the website soon!

In addition to the *...in a Nutshell* document, three modules have been developed to guide boards through orientation, board performance and planning and development.



The first document developed is a four page overview that includes the structure of public libraries in Saskatchewan, general good governance principles and a useful chart indicating the powers and responsibilities of boards and staff in libraries.

Tip: Orientation should be provided to a new board member prior to his/her attendance at the first meeting.

Discussion Guides

Each module is accompanied by a Discussion Guide designed to help board chairs and directors plan sessions and deliver content.

Each guide provides suggested delivery methods, time required and additional resources.

Saskatchewan Public Library Governance

ORIENTATION MODULE

Orientation

This document is provided as a guideline to help library administration and board chairpersons prepare an orientation for new board members.

When should the orientation take place?

Orientation should be provided to a new board member prior to his/her attendance at the first meeting. Parts of the orientation could take place annually for the entire board.

Why is board orientation important?

Board orientation is a critical first step to help new board members learn about this new position. Following the orientation module, the board member should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the board's purpose?
- What is the board's structure?
- What are the board's powers and responsibilities?
- What are the board's policies and procedures?
- What are the board's financial responsibilities?
- What are the board's legal responsibilities?
- What are the board's ethical responsibilities?
- What are the board's communication responsibilities?
- What are the board's public relations responsibilities?
- What are the board's community development responsibilities?
- What are the board's cultural responsibilities?
- What are the board's environmental responsibilities?
- What are the board's social responsibilities?
- What are the board's economic responsibilities?
- What are the board's political responsibilities?
- What are the board's international responsibilities?
- What are the board's global responsibilities?
- What are the board's universal responsibilities?
- What are the board's human responsibilities?
- What are the board's animal responsibilities?
- What are the board's plant responsibilities?
- What are the board's mineral responsibilities?
- What are the board's energy responsibilities?
- What are the board's space responsibilities?
- What are the board's time responsibilities?
- What are the board's information responsibilities?
- What are the board's knowledge responsibilities?
- What are the board's wisdom responsibilities?
- What are the board's love responsibilities?
- What are the board's peace responsibilities?
- What are the board's justice responsibilities?
- What are the board's compassion responsibilities?
- What are the board's empathy responsibilities?
- What are the board's sympathy responsibilities?
- What are the board's solidarity responsibilities?
- What are the board's cooperation responsibilities?
- What are the board's teamwork responsibilities?
- What are the board's collaboration responsibilities?
- What are the board's partnership responsibilities?
- What are the board's alliance responsibilities?
- What are the board's coalition responsibilities?
- What are the board's confederation responsibilities?
- What are the board's federation responsibilities?
- What are the board's confederacy responsibilities?
- What are the board's confederation responsibilities?
- What are the board's confederation responsibilities?

What could be included in an orientation?

- Ask new board members to present themselves and their interests - what they hope to offer the board and what they hope to gain as board members.
- Provide a brief history and evolution of the organization and review planning documents.
- Calculate issues and challenges facing the organization as well as any key trends that could impact the organization.
- Provide board members with information on organizational policies and procedures.
- Outline roles and responsibilities of staff and contrast those with the roles and responsibilities of the board. This is an opportunity to address the potentially difficult issues surrounding "ownership" or unclear lines of responsibility.
- Consider assigning a mentor - a senior member of the board is assigned to tutor a new member in the operations of the board.
- Plan a visit and tour of any of the organization's offices and facilities. Ideally, led by library administration or an experienced board member.
- Discuss options for committee involvement. There should be a solid match between the interests, skills and preferences of the individual board member and the requirements and challenges of the committee they join.
- Provide a preliminary review of financial documents.
- Review the Public Library Act and Regulations.

What could be included in an orientation information kit?

- Cover letter welcoming the new board member.
- Saskatchewan Public Library Governance - in a Nutshell.
- An organizational chart.
- List of board members and their contact information and terms of office.
- A description of programs and services.
- A description of the board's role.
- Board members and a list of committees.
- Copies of all current library policies.
- A quick description on meeting procedures.
- Budget documents (current budget, most recent audited financial statements).
- Annual report.
- Strategic plan.
- Recent board minutes and monthly financial statements.
- Brochures and promotional materials.
- How Libraries are Financed? (Appendix B).
- Library History and Current Context for Saskatchewan Public Libraries (Appendix C).



What is the purpose of an orientation?

An orientation should provide important information about the library and about the board's roles and responsibilities. An orientation sets the standard for conduct and achievement required from board members. A successful orientation will help a new board member understand the roles and responsibilities of the library board and feel prepared to actively participate in meetings.

Additional tools to use when preparing an orientation:

- Appendix A: Board Orientation Checklist
- Appendix B: How Libraries are Financed
- Appendix C: Library History and Current Context for Saskatchewan Public Libraries

Who should be responsible for the orientation?

The board chairperson with the assistance of library administration should be responsible.

Exercise 2: Board Self Evaluation

	Yes/No If No, What was the reason?	What advice will the board give to the new board to improve in this area?
Meetings		
Did the board hold all scheduled board meetings?		
Did the board cancel any board meetings because there were insufficient members to constitute a quorum?		
Did the board review all minutes of meetings?		
Did the board keep accurate records of Board meetings, activities and policies which are kept on file in the library?		
Board Conduct		
Did the board respect conflict of interest regulations?		
Did the board declare conflicts of interest and disclose and record these properly?		
Did the board seek legal opinions when necessary?		
Did the board follow the requirements of the Public Libraries Act and Regulations?		
Did the board act in all ways mindful of its civic trusteeship duty and in the interest of the public library and the ownership whom the board represents?		
Did the board reflect the diversity in the community in its composition?		
What educational opportunities would you advise the new board to pursue?		
Board Role		
Did the board have a clear understanding of its role?		
Has the board developed a complete framework for the library including by-laws, mission, goals and policies?		
Has each one of these items/tools been reviewed as to its currency and continued appropriateness at least once this term?		
Has the board conducted a review of its mission?		
What is the end result, outcome or difference that the existence of the library community will make?		
Which community members will benefit from these outcomes?		
Were the board's annual goals and objectives achieved?		
Is the mission integrated throughout the library? In other words, can everything the library does be traced back to its mission?		

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MODULE



Why is planning important?

Planning is important for libraries of all sizes. It takes time and energy to develop a plan and follow through on identified goals, but the process will lead to innovation and improvement.

Getting started:

- Review the library's mandate
- Initiate a Community Needs Assessment
- Develop an Action Plan
- Report on results

What is a Community Needs Assessment?

A Community Needs Assessment gathers information about a community's opinions, needs, challenges and assets.

- Study the community, not the library.
- The purpose is to consider new ways of being.

It is NOT:

- opinions on library operations.
- a list of things patrons want at the library.
- a list of things the library wants/needs.
- a library services satisfaction survey.

Review the library's mandate:

Review the library's policies and relevant legislation. Saskatchewan's Public Library Regulations outline the following as:

Basic library services

For the purposes of clause 2(a) of the Act, the following library services are basic library services:

- the provision of a level of service determined locally at the community level, including:
 - providing individuals with access to library resources through home access, publicly accessible computers, local branch libraries, area resource libraries and regional resource centres;
 - providing that a minimum base level of service is available provincially to ensure access to public libraries' resources and catalogued collections;
 - providing public access to local and union catalogues through the province-wide library electronic network;
 - participating in the development of electronic information access as a method of delivering reference and information services;
 - making materials available to the public through direct lending, reciprocal borrowing, interlibrary loans and various types of home delivery;
 - providing appropriately qualified and trained staff to assist the public to use library resources and services; and
 - developing a Saskatchewan universal public library card to link the individual to the system;

The development of library collections according to the needs and interests of communities, including:

- the designing, by each library system, of a process and method for evaluating and assessing local needs on an ongoing basis;
- the organizing, cataloguing and classifying of those collections; and
- maintaining catalogues of information resources and making them accessible to all Saskatchewan residents; and

The development of programs that meet local needs for cultural, economic, educational and recreational information organized around the themes of:

- promoting and raising the awareness of library resources;
- increasing information competencies;
- exploring and discovering new ideas; and
- advocating library values.

Public Libraries Regulations, 1996, RRS c P-39.2 Reg. 1