



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

Together We Learn

School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) 2026 School Trustee Candidate Guide



Election Area	Trustees
City of Kelowna	4
City of West Kelowna (Excluding Tsinstikeptum Indian Reserves 9 & 10)	1
District of Lake Country (District of Lake Country and Central Okanagan East Electoral Area of the Regional District of the Central Okanagan)	1
District of Peachland (Corporation of Peachland, Central Okanagan West Electoral Area of the Regional District of Central Okanagan, Tsinstikeptum Indian Reserve 9, and Tsinstikeptum Indian Reserve 10)	1

Disclaimer: This document provides general information and should not be relied upon as legal advice.

City of Kelowna
City Clerk's Office
1435 Water Street
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1J4
250-469-8645

City of West Kelowna
3731 Old Okanagan Hwy,
West Kelowna, BC V4T 0G7
Phone: 778-797-1000

Area 1 District of Lake Country
Municipal Hall
10150 Bottom Wood Lake Road
Lake Country, BC V4V 2M1
250-766-5650

Area 2 District of Peachland
5806 Beach Avenue
Peachland, BC V0H 1X7
250-767-3704

**Area 1 or 2
Regional District of Central Okanagan**
1450 KLO Road
Kelowna, BC V1W 3Z4
250-469-6224

Trustee Election – Important Dates

Event	Date
Trustee Candidate Information Session	August 12, 2026, 5:00 to 6:30 pm, Room 355 (Learning Centre – 1040 Hollywood Road S.)
Pre-Campaign Period	July 20, 2026 – September 18, 2026
Nomination Period	September 1, 2026 – September 11, 2026
Campaign Period	September 19, 2026 – October 16, 2026
Advance Voting Day	Saturday, October 10, 2026
General Voting Day	Saturday, October 17, 2026
Inaugural Meeting/Swearing-In:	Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 6:00 pm Main Board Room, 1040 Hollywood Road S.
BC School Trustee Association: Trustee Academy	November 26-28, 2026 Vancouver BC (<i>Trustee Academy occurs annually</i>)

School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) Overview

- 2026/2027 Annual Budget Bylaw - \$397,249,663
- is situated on the unceded Traditional Territory of the Okanagan Syilx peoples and serves approximately 3,100 students who self-identify as having Indigenous heritage.
- serves more than 235,000 citizens living in 4 municipalities - Peachland, West Kelowna, Kelowna, Lake Country, and the Regional District of Central Okanagan.
- is the fifth largest District in the province and serves over 24,800 students.
- serves 50 schools/sites - 32 elementary, 8 middle, 5 secondary, 1 alternative school, 3 learning centres and 1 online learning school (6-12).
- has 7 elected Board of Education Trustees.
- continues to welcome an increased number of immigrant families and English Language Learners (ELL) into the Central Okanagan.
- continues to welcome international students from 30 countries.
- employs approximately 4,500 full and part-time staff.

Partner Groups:

- Central Okanagan Teacher's Association (COTA)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3523
- Central Okanagan Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association (COPVPA)
- Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Council (COPAC)
- District Student Council (DSC)

Trustee Annual Remuneration:

Trustees	\$26,102
Vice-Chair	\$27,567
Chair	\$29,794

Boards of Education

Boards of Education co-govern School Districts with the provincial government. B.C.'s Ministry of Education and Child Care sets the curriculum, funding, and legal framework for K-12 education. Trustees on a Board of Education work together to govern the School District, not run the day-to-day operations, and set direction on behalf of the community. A Board of Education must protect the interests of the School District, ensure its financial viability, and act in accordance with laws and policies governing K-12 education in BC.

The Board of Education is charged with the responsibility of providing an education system that is organized and operated in the best interests of the students it serves. It exercises this responsibility through setting clear strategic direction and making wise use of resources in alignment with the Strategic Plan and District goals.

The respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Child Care and Boards of Education are described in the [School Act](#).

Significant responsibilities of Boards of Education include, but are not limited to:

1. Accountability to the Provincial Government

The Board shall:

- 1.1. Act in accordance with all statutory requirements of the provincial legislation to implement educational standards and policies.
- 1.2. Approve local collective agreements.

2. Develop and Maintain a Culture of Student Learning

The Board shall:

- 2.1. Ensure Board agendas reflect the Board's commitment to improving student learning.
- 2.2. Ensure resources for approved initiatives to improve student outcomes are included in the annual and amended budget bylaw.
- 2.3. Ensure the effectiveness of the Superintendent of Schools' leadership in improving student outcomes is assessed annually.

3. Accountability to and Engagement of Community

The Board shall:

- 3.1. Establish processes and provide opportunities for community engagement.
- 3.2. Meet regularly with municipal and provincial government representatives, and as required, with other entities, to achieve desired educational outcomes.
- 3.3. Hear appeals from parents and students where a staff decision significantly affects the education, health, or safety of the student.

4. Strategic Planning

The Board shall:

- 4.1. Provide overall direction for the District.
- 4.2. Annually set District priorities and key results.
- 4.3. Approve the District's Strategic Plan.

5. *Policy*

The Board shall:

- 5.1. Delegate authority to the Superintendent of Schools and define compensation accountabilities.
- 5.2. Set local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools.

6. *Board and Superintendent of Schools Relations*

The Board shall:

- 6.1. Select the Superintendent of Schools.
- 6.2. Provide clear Board direction to the Superintendent of Schools.
- 6.3. Annually evaluate the Superintendent of Schools in accordance with a pre-established performance appraisal mechanism.
- 6.4. Annually review the Superintendent of Schools' compensation.
- 6.5. Respect the authority of the Superintendent of Schools to carry out executive action and support the Superintendent of Schools' actions when they are exercised within the delegated discretionary powers of the position.
- 6.6. Ensure all Board members interact with the Superintendent of Schools in a respectful and professional manner.

7. *Political Advocacy and Board Development*

The Board shall:

- 7.1. Act as an advocate for public education and the District and arrange meetings with elected provincial/federal government officials to communicate and gain support for the District's priorities and directions.
- 7.2. Attend Board and Board Committee meetings.
- 7.3. Annually evaluate the Board's effectiveness.

8. *Fiscal Accountability*

The Board shall:

- 8.1. Approve the budget process and timelines at the outset of the budget process.
- 8.2. Provide direction and approve the District's annual and amended budget bylaws, capital plans, annual facilities grant spending and long-term facility plans.
- 8.3. Monitor the fiscal management of the District through multiple financial updates.
- 8.4. Appoint the auditor and approve the terms of engagement.
- 8.5. Annually review the audit report and management letter.
- 8.6. Annually review and approve the audited financial statements.
- 8.7. Review changes to student fee schedules.

9. *Additional Responsibilities*

The Board shall:

- 9.1. Attend Board and Board committee meetings.
- 9.2. Annually review and approve Board compensation.
- 9.3. Approve catchment areas for schools and District programs and changes in grade configurations.

Trustees Are:

Part of a Team – A Board of Education has the authority to make decisions or act, however, individual trustees do not. Under the *School Act*, a trustee's power lies in membership on a School Board. Trustees will debate decisions and vote. Once the board has voted, a trustee must uphold the decision.

Community Leaders – Trustees work with their Board and community partners to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to reach their maximum potential. A trustee's primary job is to participate in policy making and strategic planning in the interests of the District's students. Successful trustees are able to balance their governance role with the representative role, participating in decision making that benefits the whole board while representing the interests of their constituents.

Accountable – Boards have an important responsibility for overseeing a School District's financial decisions. The Board also oversees the development of the Strategic Plan and the allocation of resources to support that Plan, ensuring budget and staff allocations are in alignment with the District's goals.

What Does a School Trustee Do?

School trustees are the members of the School District's Board of Education. They are locally elected representatives of the public and they are the community's advocates for public education in their local School District. They are required to carry out their responsibilities in a manner that assists the Board in fulfilling its duties under the *School Act*. A trustee's role is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being, and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire District while representing the interests of their community.

Trustees Establish the District's Strategic Plan

The Board of Education is responsible for setting the overall direction for the School District. Trustees work together to establish the District's Strategic Plan, which sets the direction of the District for parents, the public and the board's staff, and lays out the priorities and strategic direction of the School District.

The Board of Education ensures that the Superintendent of Schools acts as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who holds the responsibility for implementing the District's Strategic Plan and reporting process to the Board.

During the 2025/2026 school year, the Board of Education engaged in a process to refresh the existing Strategic Plan. This engagement process included 14 in-person public and partner sessions as well as an online public engagement survey. Participants included students, parents/caregivers, teachers, school-based staff, Indigenous partners, school and District leaders, Parent Advisory Council representatives, and community voices. Collectively, the engagement generated a consistent and compelling picture of what our community wants most for learners and for public education in Central Okanagan Public Schools.

The Board of Education directed the Superintendent of Schools to develop a revised multi-year Strategic Plan, informed by the 2026 strategic planning engagement findings. The renewed framework will centre on the following priorities:

1. **Strong Foundations and Future Readiness** – Learning will be intentionally designed so that students develop and are able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for success.
2. **Meaningful and Inclusive Learning** – Learning experiences are designed to be engaging, relevant, inclusive and culturally responsive, ensuring that every learner sees themselves in their learning.
3. **Student Agency and Voice** – Students will be active participants in their learning, exploring passions and interests, setting goals and reflecting on how their learning connects to their goals and interests.
4. **Belonging, Wellbeing, and Safe Learning Communities** – Our learning environments will foster healthy, safe and inclusive learning.
5. **Families and Community as Partners in Learning** – We will engage in meaningful and authentic partnerships with families, Indigenous communities and community partners to enhance student learning.
6. **Responsive, Sustainable, and Stewardship-Centred Leadership** – Our decisions are proactive, responsive, and guided by equity, student needs and sustainability to demonstrate thoughtful stewardship of finite resources.



TRUSTEES ARE A PART OF A TEAM

Under the *School Act*, a Board of Education has the authority to make decisions or act; however, individual trustees do not.

Healthy debate is an important aspect of good governance. However, once the Board has voted, it is the Board's decision and an individual trustee's responsibility to act in a manner that promotes and upholds the Board's decision, and to communicate the Board's decision back to the public.

The issues that motivate an individual to run for school trusteeship can often be deeply personal. A passion for issues in public education is important to guide one's work; however, it is vital to the success of the Board of Education that each trustee look beyond personal issues to make decisions that benefit the School District.

TRUSTEES ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Trustees work with their Board colleagues and community partners to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to reach their greatest abilities.

While members of the Board act as representatives of their community, their primary job is to participate in policy-making and strategic planning that are in the interests of all of the District's students and are grounded in promoting student achievement and well-being.

BOARDS ARE EMPLOYERS

The Board of Education shall select the Superintendent of Schools, delegate authority and provide clear Board direction.

▪ SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Superintendent of Schools is the Board's key employee. A Board's relationship with its Superintendent of Schools is the most important employment relationship in the District and is central and critical to effective governance. The Superintendent of Schools is the sole employee who reports directly to the Board of Education, with all other employees reporting directly or indirectly to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools also serves as the Board of Education's chief advisor. The Board is responsible for the recruitment, selection, and performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools.

▪ PERSONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS

The terms and conditions of employment for exempt employees of a District are outlined in each employee's personal service contract. While Boards of Education are responsible for the development and management of the Superintendent of Schools'

contract, the Superintendent of Schools and Secretary-Treasurer/CFO are responsible for managing the contracts of the District's other exempt staff.

▪ COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

A Board of Education, and individual trustees, rely on District staff to advise and implement collective agreements and maintain communication processes necessary for good employee relations.

▪ GOVERNANCE OF LABOUR RELATIONS

As the employer's representative governing body, a Board of Education is responsible for setting appropriate policy and establishing oversight for labour relations functions within its School District.

TRUSTEES ARE FINANCIAL STEWARDS

School Districts are significant businesses in communities. Boards have important responsibilities for approval and oversight of School District financial decisions. One of the most important aspects of governance for trustees is to connect District goals, strategic planning, and economic realities, through the establishment of the School District's annual and amended budgets. The Board of Education oversees development of a Strategic Plan and the allocation of resources to support that Plan. The Board of Education ensures the budget and staff allocations are in alignment with the plan and the identified goals that are intended to improve outcomes for students.

BOARD'S ROLE WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

BC operates under a two-tier structure for both teacher and support staff collective bargaining, with the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and CUPE National negotiating provincial issues, and local teacher/support staff associations and Boards of Education negotiating local issues.

BCPSEA is the employers' association and the accredited bargaining agent for the province's 60 public Boards of Education.

The Provincial Collective Agreement between BCPSEA and BCTF was ratified in 2026 for the period July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2029.

As of July 2026, BCPSEA and CUPE have reached a tentative provincial framework agreement, and local bargaining is in progress.

AM I UP TO THE JOB?

Trustee candidates do not need to have a background in public education. However, the following skills and experience would be assets for potential trustee candidates and will be developed throughout a trustee's tenure:

- Understand official meeting procedures and School District governance policies. Candidates should review the Board's bylaws, governance policies and code of ethics. Candidates may wish to attend school board meetings or speak to existing board members to get an understanding of the process.
- Awareness of the legal, political, and legislative parameters in which school boards operate.
- Review *Robert's Rules of Order*, which is a manual of parliamentary procedures.

Board operations are often highly prescribed by legislation or provincial policy. In executing their duties, trustees will develop an understanding of the legislative process, the structure, and relevant provisions of school legislation, government policy, and board policy.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Financial oversight of a School District is complex work that requires trustees to be able to interpret budgets, financial statements, information, and data; ask the right questions; and ultimately govern the financial, business and capital decisions of their School District. Trustees, through the trustee orientation program and BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) learning events, will be provided with the support necessary to fulfill their financial oversight responsibilities; however, to better understand a District's budget and financial statements, candidates should review the District's website.

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

The Board of Education has the responsibility to competently protect the interests, image, and credibility of the School District, to ensure its financial viability and to act in accordance with all applicable laws and board policies governing the Board and its actions. These are significant and complex responsibilities that entail trustees acquiring education sector knowledge and skills to deal with the required range of information and decisions effectively, and to exercise appropriate oversight and accountabilities to protect the interests of students, families, and the broader community.

FINANCIAL INTERESTS

You must include a written disclosure of your financial interests, as required by section 2(1) of the *Financial Disclosure Act*. This statement must provide details of both your corporate and personal holdings.

TIME COMMITMENT

Time commitments will vary but it is not uncommon for a trustee to spend an average of 15 hours per week on all the activities associated with the role, including:

- prepare for and attend Board and Board Committee meetings;
- attend community meetings as a representative of the Board of Education;
- attend BCSTA Annual General Meetings;
- respond to the concerns of parents and other community members; and
- respond to telephone calls, emails, meeting requests and queries from parents or members of the community as a member of the Board.

2026/2027 MEETING DATES AND TIMES

The Board and Board Committee meeting dates and times can be found [here](#) on the District's website.

ELIGIBILITY

If you want to run for the Board of Education, you must be a Canadian citizen who will be age 18 or older on general voting day. You must have been a BC resident for at least six months. You must not be disqualified under the *School Act* or any other enactment from being nominated for, elected to, or holding office as a school trustee. If you are endorsed by an elector organization, information regarding elector organizations is available on the [Elections BC website](#). Please see the [Francophone Education Authorities Regulation](#) for qualifications to be a trustee in School District 93 (Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique).

BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

You may be a Board of Education employee and want to run for a seat on your employer's Board. Before you are nominated, you must give notice in writing to your employer of your intention to consent to the nomination. You must take a leave of absence from your employment with the Board beginning on the first day of the nomination period or the date on which the notice is given, whichever is later. You will have to resign from your employment with the School District if you are elected to the Board of Education. If you are a School District employee and want to seek election to a Board of Education that is not your employer, you don't have to take a leave of absence or resign. There may, however, be circumstances when you are ineligible to participate in certain Board of Education matters due to potential conflicts of interest which may arise from your being an employee of a Board and a school trustee (e.g., provincial collective bargaining if you are a unionized employee in one School District and a trustee in another District).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest rules in the *School Act* and those derived from the common law (laws developed through court decisions) apply to school trustees. The oath of office which trustees take includes a solemn affirmation that the trustee “will comply with the requirements of the *School Act* that relate to conflict of interest and, in particular, will comply with the requirements relating to disclosure of pecuniary and indirect pecuniary interest in a matter.” Part 5 of the *School Act* addresses pecuniary (monetary) conflicts of interest. If a matter being considered by a Board of Education could monetarily affect a trustee on the Board, or certain other persons associated with the trustee, the trustee is said to have a pecuniary interest in the matter. If a trustee has a pecuniary interest, the law considers the trustee to have a conflict unless the trustee falls within a few narrow exceptions set out in the *School Act*. Conflict of interest law says that the pecuniary interests of certain people associated with a school trustee through family, such as a spouse, parent or child, will be treated as though they were the trustee’s personal pecuniary interests.

For example, a school trustee whose spouse, parent or child is a member of a union that represents unionized staff in a School District in British Columbia, is not eligible to be elected to the Board of Directors of the BCPSEA; be a school trustee member of a BCPSEA bargaining team, or represent a Board of Education at any general meeting of BCPSEA or at any other function of BCPSEA.

If a trustee has a pecuniary interest in a matter that is being considered at a Board or Board Committee meeting, the trustee must disclose the pecuniary interest, not take part in any discussion of the matter, abstain from voting on the matter, and not attempt in any way to influence the voting on the matter before, during or after the meeting. Situations sometimes arise where a trustee does not have a financial interest in a matter before the Board, but their involvement in the matter may give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias. For example, the Board may be called on to deal with an issue involving close personal friends or relatives. At common law, a trustee is not qualified to vote on a matter in which they have a “personal interest” distinct from that of the community generally that could lead a reasonably well-informed outsider to think that the trustee’s judgment could be influenced by that interest. In other words, the personal interest would lead to a “reasonable apprehension of bias.”

COMPLYING WITH ELECTION RULES

You alone are responsible for complying with the election rules, including ensuring all the documents and the deposit, connected with your nomination, are filed with the chief election officer for your community by the deadline

FILING YOUR NOMINATION

You will submit paperwork to the local chief election officer. School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) requires a minimum of two nominators, and a \$100 deposit.

KEY DATES

Milestone	Date
Expense Limits published	May 31, 2026
Pre-Campaign Period begins	July 20, 2026
Nomination Period begins	September 1, 2026
Nomination Period closes	September 11, 2026
Declaration of Candidates	September 14, 2026
Deadline: Challenge of Nominations	September 15, 2026
Deadline: Candidate Withdrawal	September 18, 2026
Campaign Period	September 19 - October 16, 2026
Declaration of Election by Voting	September 14, 2026
General Election	October 17, 2026
Declaration of Official Results	October 21, 2026
Swearing-in Ceremony/Inaugural Meeting	November 10, 2026

CAMPAIGN FINANCING

School trustee candidates are governed by the same campaign financing rules as local government candidates. These rules are found in the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Elections BC administers the campaign financing and election advertising rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*. The *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* became law in 2014 and is available on the BC Laws website (www.bclaws.ca).

Campaign financing rules are complex. They are described in more detail in Elections BC resource materials.

CAMPAIGNING

Ensure you are familiar with rules relating to your campaign including:

- Local government bylaws relating to signage.
- School District policy relating to political activities in schools.
- Ministry of Transportation’s signs policy.
- Election advertising on the internet.
- Campaign rules applicable to general voting day.

Helpful links and resources for trustee candidates
School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)
www.sd23.bc.ca

School District Resources

- [District Purpose, Cultural Values and Overarching Goal](#)
- [Role of School Boards](#)
- [Trustee Handbook](#)
- [Central Okanagan Board of Education Policies](#)
- [District Long Term Facilities Plan](#)
- [Catchment Area Maps](#)
- [Meeting Dates and Times](#)
- [2024/2025 Financial Statements](#)
- [2024/2025 Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis](#)
- [2026/2027 Annual Budget](#)
- [Multi-Year Financial Plan](#)
- [Five-Year Capital Plan](#)

Legislation and Ministry Resources

[Relevant Sections](#)

- Part 4 – School Trustees:
 - Division 3 – Elections (Page C-35)
 - Division 5 – Election Proceedings (Page C-46)

Ministry of Education and Child Care

- [School Trustee Election Procedures in B.C.](#)
- [Ministry of Education and Child Care](#)
- [Framework for Enhancing Student Learning](#)

Campaign Financing and Local Elections

- [Elections BC](#)
- [Candidate, Elector Organizations and their Financial Agents](#)
- [Resources - General Local Elections \(Ministry of Municipal Affairs\)](#)
- [Candidate Videos \(Ministry of Municipal Local Government\)](#)

Local Elections Legislation

- [Local Government Act](#)
- [Local Government Election Regulation, B Reg. 380/93](#)

[Financial Disclosure Act](#)

[Financial Disclosure Act Reg. 32/2001](#)

[Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#)

[Local Elections Statute Amendment Act](#)